



Journal of The Brotherhood of Man Library, an Information, Telecommunication and Lending Service Resource for Students of *The URANTIA Book*.

Editorial

Martin Gardner's recently published book *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery* is not only an attempt to debunk *The Urantia Book* but is also a public exposé about various activities, people, and leadership of the Urantia movement. Gardner's book is so biased in its presentation of some aspects associated with the Urantia Papers that it appears it could safely be ignored. However Gardner has also delved deeply into the history of the beginnings of the Urantia movement, right through to the present time. In doing so, he has publicized much material that does not reflect well upon the movement and its members, material that most of us would prefer to see buried and forgotten. But now it has been made public and it behooves us to get our act in order—for has not the Master instructed us:

Then Jesus spoke, saying: "Now that you are ambassadors of my Father's kingdom, you have thereby become a class of men separate and distinct from all other men on earth. You are not now as men among men but as the enlightened citizens of another and heavenly country among the ignorant creatures of this dark world. It is not enough that you live as you were before this hour, but henceforth must you live as those who have tasted the glories of a better life and have been sent back to earth as ambassadors of the Sovereign of that new and better world."

Few people reading Gardner's book will ever get the impression that members of the Urantia movement are now, or ever have been, other than very ordinary Urantia mortals—despite long term exposure to the teachings of the book. And surely that is a shocking indictment of us all. Who thought, "Who, me?" However, the book teaches us that, in the long run, all things work together for good to those who love God. Hence we can turn Gardner's indictment to our advantage. All that is required is sincerity and individual consultation with our indwelling spirit guides.

An old proverb states that what we don't know

In this issue...

Editorial.....	1
Review, Martin Gardner's <i>Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery</i> by Dick Bain.....	2
The Purpose of Revelation: A response to Martin Gardner's <i>Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery</i> by Meredith Sprunger.....	4
Reading <i>The Urantia Book</i> as a Religious Practice by David Kantor.....	11
Cosmic Reflections. A reply to some of the Gardner criticisms from Ken Glasziou.....	15

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about we need not worry about. But if we do not know about "it" neither can we change "it." For the sake of knowing about some of the issues touched upon by Gardner, for this one issue of Innerface we are deviating from normal editorial policy by permitting mention of topics bordering on being "political." The opinions expressed by authors of its various articles are their own, not necessarily those of our editorial panel. In case that sounds like a cop-out, let me state that I personally believe that they come close to being truth.

Ken Glasziou, Maleny

Subscriptions for 1996

It's a new year starting and we need your help to continue with this newsletter. So please dig into the pocket and forward your \$10 (more if you like) to David Biggs for USA contributors and to Ken Glasziou for all others. Addresses as above.

Martin Gardner's "Urantia, The Great Cult Mystery."

A review by Dick Bain

Several years ago, Martin Gardner, a columnist for a journal called *The Skeptical Inquirer* wrote two very uncomplimentary columns about *The Urantia Book*. About a year later, he decided to write a book on the same subject. He began to interview people in the Urantia community and to research material for his book. I was invited to his home for an interview and I accepted. That was how I met Martin Gardner.

In his book Gardner states that he couldn't understand how I could admit that the book contains some errors, yet be open to the idea of fandroids, birds large enough to carry several people. He calls me a "large friendly engineer" in his book; he didn't find some other people so friendly. Some folks refused to talk to him and some became very angry when they read his book. Why were some people so angry about his book? Did he do justice to *The Urantia Book* in his "book report?"

Connections with Seventh Day Adventism

One of the major themes of his book is that there is a connection between the Seventh Day Adventist church and *The Urantia Book*. He attempts to prove this by showing that at least two of the people on the contact commission, Dr. William Sadler and Wilfred Kellogg, had both been members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. Furthermore, Wilfred's father, the well known John Kellogg, was a prominent member of the church. Gardner also attempts to show that all three of these men had a great respect for Ellen White, an Adventist prophetess. But they all lost that respect

and began to doubt her prophecies when they found out that she had plagiarized from human sources much of the material that she claimed was divine revelation. John Kellogg was ejected from the church, and not long after this Wilfred and Dr. Sadler both apparently resigned from the church. Gardner tries to show that the concepts in *The Urantia Book* are Adventist except for a few minor(!) ones like the doctrine of the Atonement and Original Sin. Gardner theorizes that Wilfred, Dr. Sadler and perhaps others generated *The Urantia Book*, and that accounts for its similarity to Adventism. And just what are these Adventist ideas?

Dr Sadler and Wilfred Kellogg wrote the Urantia Papers?

In a chapter devoted to the Adventist-Urantia Book connection, Gardner lists numerous similarities. Two of the major ideas that are the same in the two are: No Hell, and soul sleeping until resurrection. He states that these concepts disagree with the concepts of "mainline Christianity." He does not mention that at least two other smaller denominations do not support the idea of Hell; the two I know of are Unity and Unitarian Universalist. As far as the sleeping souls are concerned, I have never heard that Christian theology universally refutes this idea. He also tries to show that the Paradise-centered cosmology of *The Urantia Book* has as its source Ellen White's ideas about the universe because she spoke of the "throne of God" with all creation circling around it. But he also admits that Adventists have long believed that the creation is 6000 years old. This is certainly different from the over four billion year age *The Urantia Book* gives for the earth and the over one trillion year age given for our local universe.

Gardner mentions several other similarities. Michael, the archangel, and Jesus are one in the same person according to both sources. He says that both teach the annihilation of the wicked. This is not strictly correct; what *The Urantia Book* teaches is actually non-resurrection of those who reject God. Had Gardner been an unbiased book reviewer, he would have given us a complete picture; he would have pointed out how *The Urantia Book* agrees or disagrees with the theology of other segments of Christianity. But perhaps that would have diluted his theme that *The Urantia Book* is an Adventist derivative.

Contradictory logic

While Gardner makes some good points, he sometimes uses contradictory logic in an attempt to prove some of his points. At one place he theorizes



that the ideas in *The Urantia Book* agree with Adventist theology because Wilfred had been an Adventist; at another place, he tells us that some ideas don't agree because Wilfred "...abandoned Adventist beliefs." (Pg. 226) Elsewhere, Gardner says that if Sadler left something in the book that turned out to be obviously wrong it was because he feared that readers would notice if he changed it. On the other hand, Gardner cites testimony that *The Urantia Book* was being edited until about 1949. So no one noticed the editing?

resurrection taught by both the Adventists and *The Urantia Book*. Note however, that in the Bible Jesus was not resurrected immediately. Surprisingly, though Gardner criticizes moving the comma, he also presents arguments in favor of doing so. For a change, he's almost an impartial observer.

While Gardner is impressed with the Jesus papers, he does not think they are revealed truth. His theory is that this section of *The Urantia Book* was written by Dr. Sadler with perhaps some help from Dr. Lena Sadler, his wife.

Gardner's multiple personality hypothesis

Gardner expressed the opinion that Wilfred's channeled material was coming from an alternate personality within Wilfred's mind. He also feels that Dr. Sadler wrote material and presented it to the revelators for approval by way of the sleeping Wilfred. It is difficult to believe that Dr. Sadler spent a fair amount of time investigating mediums and recognized this alternate personality in them, but not in Wilfred. But not all of Gardner's comments about *The Urantia Book* were negative.

Urantia Book science and eugenics take a drubbing

Gardner is the most critical of the science of *The Urantia Book*, especially the eugenics. He ties the eugenics in the book to Dr. Sadler's interest and writings about eugenics. Indeed, science and eugenics are two areas in which the book is most vulnerable to attack by critics.

Many students of *The Urantia Book* struggle with both the science and the eugenics in it. If the writers of the book had claimed that these ideas were divinely inspired, the credibility of the rest of the book would be seriously compromised. Since this is not the case, Gardner is simply pointing out what many students already know, and what the authors of the book admit—there are flaws in the science of the book. Nevertheless, there are some ideas in the book such as plate tectonics that Gardner can't explain away easily without stretching the truth beyond its breaking point.

The eugenics issue is one that deserves some thoughtful consideration. Did the authors overstate their case? Ironically, Gardner may have done us a favor by pointing out areas of the book that other critics will surely target. The *Urantia* community needs to decide how to deal with such critics.

Comments on the Jesus papers

Gardner calls the Jesus section of *The Urantia Book* impressive, but he points out that it's not the only well written life of Christ. He extols Ellen White's life of Jesus, *Desire of Ages*, as "beautifully written," though he says that much of it was plagiarized. He points out several similarities between Ellen White's work and the life of Jesus in *The Urantia Book*. He states that both the Adventist bible and *The Urantia Book* move the comma in the biblical quotation where Jesus says to the thief on the cross beside him, *I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise* from just after "you" to after "today"—this then allows for the time lag between death and

Polytheism

Another charge Gardner levels at *The Urantia Book* is that it is polytheistic because it lists a number of gods. When he interviewed me, I pointed out that the same charge could be entered against Christianity because of the three persons of the Trinity; he chose not to reply to that charge. This didn't surprise me since he intimated that the Christian "Trinity" is polytheism in another of his books, *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener*. He seems to think that "the gods" refer to all of the various spiritual beings described by *The Urantia Book*. This is not so. The term "God" or "Gods" is reserved for the Father,

German Translation of the Urantia Papers

A German translation of the Papers is well on its way. However, help would be appreciated from any readers with a good knowledge of German and English. If you would like to help bring the Papers to our German brothers and sisters, contact BOML, Australia as per address on the front page.

Son, Infinite Spirit, the Supreme, the Ultimate and the Absolute. And ultimately, all these are unified in the I AM. Had Gardner read the book more carefully, he would have known this.

Gardner finds Urantia Book funny

Gardner's book took a great deal of effort and research; I'm sure that he knew it would have a very limited audience. He even revealed in his book that his wife thought he was wasting his time writing it. He claims that he wrote the book because of Dr. Sadler: "It is because of this astonishing switch of an intelligent, gifted man, from one cult to another..." He goes on to say, "I also must confess that I wrote this book because I found Urantiaism to be almost as funny as Mormonism, Christian Science, and Sun-Moonism." Of course, he does mention early in his book that he had been an avid Adventist when he was a young man until he became quite disillusioned with it. Could his enmity for Adventism, and Dr. Sadler's early connection with Adventism have anything to do with Gardner's unrelenting attacks on *The Urantia Book*?

Is Gardner's book worth reading?

Is Gardner's book worth reading? While it's not deathless prose, it does put together more of the early history of the community and origins of *The Urantia Book* than anyone else has. It's unfortunate that he was not more of an unbiased reporter, but then perhaps he wouldn't have had the motivation to write the book. It's also unfortunate that he gives so much credence to the opinions of the late Harold Sherman and Sherman's widow. Since Sherman had a falling out with Dr. Sadler and the Forum and parted company with ill feelings, he can hardly be called a reliable source of information. But yes, we need to read his book. We can sometimes learn more from our opponents than from friends. Opponents may be biased, but sometimes they point out things that we'd rather not admit.

Concluding remarks

I told Gardner at the end of our interview that I am a pragmatist. I try to evaluate spiritual material on the basis of its value to our spiritual life. I asked him if he thought that *The Urantia Book* was in the main helpful or detrimental to peoples' spiritual growth. He didn't seem to have an opinion in the matter. But of course, this isn't the sort of question that a skeptic trying to debunk a book would ask the people he's interviewing. It is acceptable, even desirable to point



out apparent flaws in *The Urantia Book*, but in fairness, any reviewer should also point out the value of this book to those seeking to establish a relationship with God. Despite any real or imagined flaws Gardner points out in this book, I can say along with a host of others that this book persuaded me to think about my relationship with God like nothing else I have ever experienced. What is more important to our spiritual lives than finding God? *The Urantia Book* admonishes us to distinguish between that which has value from that which is value. This book has the value of leading us to God, who is the ultimate source of not only that which *has value* but even of that which *is value*.

The Purpose of Revelation: A Response to Martin Gardner's *Urantia*: *The Great Cult Mystery*

Meredith Sprunger

The purpose of revelation is to reveal and enlarge spiritual truth. All presentations of revelation are communicated in the intellectual-cultural frames of reference of the times in which they are given.

The frame of reference is transitory. The truth is eternal

These human concepts carrying the revelation are transitory, but the truth they proclaim is eternal. For instance, the 7-day creation story in the Bible which theologians now classify as "myth," made sense in the simplistic cosmology of pre-scientific times and effectively transmitted the spiritual truth that God is the source of all creation.

Every epochal revelation and all religions giving expression to the truths of revelation have a history of development that have many commonalities because human nature tends to exhibit consistent patterns, and we can learn from studying these past religious developments. There is a tendency in the early stages of all personal and social responses to revelation to

identify the temporal intellectual-scientific-cultural vehicle concepts with the enlarged spiritual truths presented. The enlarging spiritual vision is so captivating and fulfilling that individual religionists

Never confuse the vehicle with the truth it conveys

and groups not only identify the temporal vehicle concepts with the eternal truths, they regard both as infallible and inerrant. Such theological beliefs have come to be referred to under the rubric of "fundamentalism." These fundamentalists are often dedicated, wonderful people.

Many individuals who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible have spent their entire lives attempting to harmonize its temporal human concept carriers with its eternal spiritual truths. It took centuries of experience and theological scholarship to finally separate the temporal Biblical carrier concepts associated with the Fourth Epochal Revelation from its eternal spiritual truths and prepare the planet for the Fifth Epochal Revelation. It is the eternal spiritual truths pointed to by the Bible which make it an enduring document, not its outdated scientific-cultural carrier concepts.

Demythologizing The Urantia Book

Students of the Fifth Epochal Revelation are now experiencing this same inclination to identify its scientific-cultural concepts with the enlarged and inspiring spiritual truths it presents. The historic dichotomy which our planet has experienced between science and religion no doubt inspired the revelators of the Fifth Epochal Revelation to present an integrated view of the relationships of science, philosophy, and religion in the universe. The mandates under which the revelators worked, in my judgment, are wise and

spiritually sound.

To understand the Urantia Revelation you must understand its mandates.

They were required to use contemporary

scientific frames of reference which they acknowledged would soon be in need of revision. They were instructed to use concepts indigenous to our culture and only use their own formulations when they could not find a human expression that was relevant to their purposes. They tell us that they used thousands of the highest human formulations of truth. The research of Matthew Block is verifying these statements and showing us the ingenious ways they have improved these human sources.

The central thing to remember about revelation, as we have mentioned, is that its purpose is to reveal and enlarge spiritual truth. The accompanying scientific facts and cultural folkways used to carry and present

When Life Goes On and On
 The pulsing flow of starlight,
 The tidal pull of moon at night,
 The waterfalls of valleys lush,
 The rays of sunshine's rush—
 Science says all seek entropy,
 A state of dispersed energy.
 That earth rotates on anon
 It insists will too be gone
 When the solar furnace busts
 No perpetual machine of life
 Exists to run it forever rife
 With mighty, incessant gusts,
 All will end in piles of dusts.

 But in eternity God's light
 Persuades the halls of Paradise,
 His potent power and force fuel
 Universes here and beyond,
 And when these systems each evolve
 To His spirit's prior purpose,
 They too will revolve on and on.
 Robert Walker, Soquel, USA.

these spiritual truths are transitory. It is the genius of revelation that eternal spiritual truths can be presented using temporal facts and changing cultural customs. The cosmological and metaphysical concepts of revelation are important because they are frames of reference which make its message relevant in the times in which the revelation is given. The enlarged spiritual cosmology of the Fifth Epochal Revelation is critically important for mainline, liberal Christianity—as well as traditional religions. Since contemporary Christology is rooted in prescientific material cosmology and an extremely simplistic spiritual cosmology, theologians are regarding the doctrine of exclusive salvation through faith in the post-resurrection Jesus as increasingly unbelievable. They are no longer able to affirm what has been called the "scandal of particularity."

Christian theology is in desperate need of the spiritual cosmology presented in *The Urantia Book* to envision a metaphysical conception of reality that will enable theologians to comprehend the "glory of particularity" in the post-resurrection personality of Jesus. The Fifth Epochal Revelation "does synthesize apparently divergent sciences of nature and the

theology of religion into a consistent and logical universe philosophy, a co-ordinated and unbroken explanation of both science and religion, thus creating a harmony of mind and a satisfaction of spirit which answers in human experience those questionings of the mortal mind which craves to know how the Infinite works out his will and plans in matter, with minds, and on spirit. (1106).

The authors of *The Urantia Book* on page 1109-10 give an excellent description of the use of transitory knowledge and eternal truth in revelation. "Truth may be relatively inspired, even though revelation is a spiritual phenomenon. While statements with reference to cosmology are never inspired, such revelations are of immense value in that they at least transiently clarify knowledge by:

- 1. The reduction of confusion by the authoritative elimination of error.
- 2. The co-ordination of known or about to be known facts and observations.
- 3. The restoration of important bits of lost knowledge concerning epochal transactions in the distant past.
- 4. The supplying of information which will fill in vital missing gaps in otherwise earned knowledge.
- 5. Presenting cosmic data in such a manner as to illuminate the spiritual teachings contained in the accompanying revelation."

While the enlarged spiritual cosmology is basic in presenting expanded spiritual truth, the authors of *The Urantia Book*

60 years on, the book's science and cosmology are now outdated

repeatedly warn against identifying the

temporal scientific-cultural frames of reference of the book with its eternal spiritual truths. *Urantia Book* fundamentalists seem to have just as much trouble separating the temporal scientific-cultural-carrying



If you shut up truth and bury it under the ground, it will but grow, and gather to itself such explosive power that the day it bursts through it will blow up everything in its way.

Emile Zola, *J'accuse*

vehicle concepts from the eternal truths of *The Urantia Book* as do the Biblical fundamentalists. They retort, "The *Urantia Book* is not the Bible!" Obviously not, but human mind makes the same identity responses linking the temporal and the eternal aspects of revelation. In all probability, they will spend their lives attempting to harmonize the book's contemporary carrier concepts with its eternal spiritual truths.

Martin Gardner's recent book, *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*, is designed to undermine the credibility of *The Urantia Book*. To accomplish this purpose Gardner deals almost entirely with the human concept carriers, not the spiritual truths themselves. In actuality,

Gardner deals only with the human concept-carrier, never with spiritual truth.

history may show that it helped to focus attention on the real spiritual quality of The Fifth Epochal Revelation (which he totally ignores) that will ensure its recognition and appreciation for centuries to come. Although Gardner's book abounds with misinformation, erroneous assumptions and fantastic speculations, it may be fortuitous that it appeared early in the *Urantia* movement.

Gardner is best known as the author of columns in the *Scientific American* and the *Skeptical Inquirer*. He is a professional debunker of psychic and esoteric phenomena. Gardner is an indefatigable researcher reporting facts, events, and rumors which make *The Urantia Book* appear in the worst possible light. *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery* is a hodgepodge of information and speculation about Ellen White's revelations, Seventh day Adventism beliefs, Oahspe revelations, numerology, scientific errors in *The Urantia Book*, deviant activities, and controversy in the *Urantia* movement. His book is focused on the scientific-cultural-carrier vehicle aspects of *The Urantia Book* and largely ignores its spiritual truths.

He believes Wilfred Kellogg channeled *The Urantia Book* and Dr. Sadler edited and revised it. Since the supermortal authors of the Urantia Papers tell us they have used the ideas of thousands of human beings in the production of the book and research is confirming this fact, it would not be surprising if Dr. Sadler's ideas were among this distinguished group. But, for many reasons, I am confident that Dr. Sadler did not write or revise the book.

Gardner attempts to denigrate the spiritual quality of *The Urantia Book* not by dealing directly with this issue but using many of the classic logical fallacies:

- 1. *The Genetic Fallacy.* Gardner asserts that *The Urantia Book* is the product of channeling; therefore, he implies, its message is inferior, or, at least, the product of human authorship. *The Urantia Book* is not the product of channeling activity. In 1958, I arranged a meeting of a group of ministers who were making a critical study of *The Urantia Book* and Dr. William S. Sadler to discuss the origin of the Urantia Papers. When we arrived, he had prepared a paper for us listing every imaginable form of subconscious mind or psychic activity, including channeling. At the bottom of the outline he had a note saying, "The technique of reception of *The Urantia Book* in English in no way parallels or impinges upon any of the above phenomena of marginal consciousness." He went on to tell us that as far as he could determine, the appearance of the Urantia Papers was associated with some form of superconscious mind activity.
- Even if the book were a product of channeling, or any other technique or source of authorship, the only way to ascertain its quality is by evaluating its content or teachings. The real issue of spiritual quality is not seriously considered by Gardner.



"Woe upon you, scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites! for you are scrupulous to cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter, but within there remains the filth of extortion, excesses, and deception. You are spiritually blind. Do you not recognize how much better it would be first to cleanse the inside of the cup, and then that which spills over would of itself cleanse the outside?"

- 2. *The Post Hoc Ergo Hoc Fallacy* (After this, therefore, because of this). Gardner points to the contradictions in Sister Ellen White's pronouncements, documents her plagiarisms, and recites disputes among Seventh-day Adventists. Early in my correspondence with Gardner I observed that he had an emotional fixation on Seventh-day Adventism. I was therefore not surprised to read on his p. 181, "I have always been interested in the history of Seventh-day Adventism ever since, as a young boy, I considered myself an Adventist." After these extensive references to Seventh-day Adventism, Gardner implies that since Dr. Sadler as a young man was active in Seventh-day Adventism ministry, *The Urantia Book* is in many ways an outgrowth of the beliefs of Seventh-day Adventism.
- This is a vast distortion of fact and truth. *The Urantia Book* contains many theological and philosophical positions which are harmonious with insights in many of the world religions. Although it most closely parallels the insights of progressive mainline Christian theology, **The book is unique** historical analysis may show that the Mormon movement, Seventh-day Adventism, and other contemporary religious movements were instrumental in preparing for the advent of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. *The Urantia Book* at the same time differs, particularly in its spiritual cosmology, from all traditional religious positions. Gardner again fails to discuss the spiritual truths presented by *The Urantia Book* with which he may disagree.
- *The Faulty Generalization Fallacy.* Gardner cites the absurd dietary beliefs and practices of Dr. John Kellogg, Vern Grimsley's deceptive

pronouncements, the strange visions of Joe Pope, and the controversial beliefs of the channeling movement, and implies that these reflect the content of Urantia Book teachings—for there are none!

- *The Irrelevant Conclusion Fallacy.* Gardner analyzes and uses the scientific errors in *The Urantia Book* to depreciate its value even though the authors clearly state that the science and cosmology of the book are not inspired and will soon need to be updated.

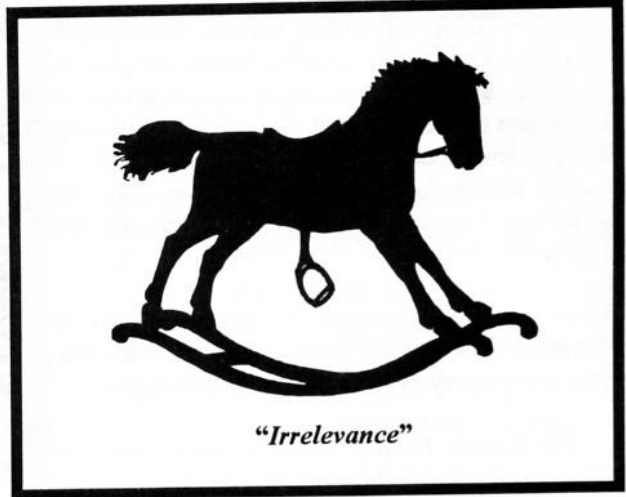
Gardner knew about, but ignored, the mandate.

He also notes that human sources were used, which he labels as plagiarism, and thereby implies that the spiritual quality of the book is equally erroneous and human.

- As we mentioned earlier, the authors of *The Urantia Book* clearly state that they have used

Even 15 volume encyclopedias that contain nothing original, nevertheless name no sources. So what is the problem?

human sources and why they are using them. The use of these human sources is often handled in such a way as to arrive at a position differing from that of the human author. To accuse the superhuman authors of plagiarism is a bit far fetched, as they are not concealing the use of human sources and they deliberately avoided reference to specific human personalities—they do not want any St. Peter or St. Paul connected with the Fifth Epochal Revelation. This, in my judgment, is certainly a wise decision. There is very little in *The Urantia Book* which would support Urantia Book fundamentalism! Nonetheless, revelation always gives rise to fundamentalists.



- 5. *Ad Hominem Fallacy.* Since Gardner is apparently not interested in grappling with the spiritual content of Urantia Book teachings, he attacks the activities of people he assumes are associated with its origin or who are Urantia Book readers: Seventh-day Adventists, the atypical people in the Urantia movement, as well as Dr. Sadler. He quotes Harry Loose (so far as I know, no one in the Urantia movement has ever heard of him except Harold Sherman) as saying, "The truth is that Sadler is mentally unsound. A paranoid with a religio-power complex— feverishly grasping for greater justification for greater jurisdiction of the mentalities of the many." (Gardner's p.149) "Sherman was convinced," Gardner writes, "that after Lena died Sadler became paranoid, his mind 'perverse and deranged.' Both he and his son Bill, Sherman wrote, 'will lie and frame anybody and [do] anything to accomplish their purposes.'" (p. 150). Gardner's personal opinion is a little more reserved, "Although I do not question Sadler's honesty and sincerity, I am convinced that he fell victim in his declining years to delusions of self-importance and grandeur of the sort that occasionally descend on the elderly." (p. 403)

Were Gardner's sources reliable? Read what Gardner said about them!

Anyone who knew Dr. Sadler will recognize that these statements are ridiculous. Dr. Sadler was an exceptionally well balanced, rational individual. He did not express his opinion about an issue unless asked. He deliberately removed himself from leadership responsibilities in the Urantia Foundation and the Urantia Brotherhood and did not try to influence their decisions. He did everything he could to prevent his name from being associated with *The Urantia Book*. I was amazed at his ability to remove

*For him who would fain
 teach the world
 The world holds hate in-
 deed
 For Socrates the hemlock
 cup;
 For Christ, Gethsemane.*

Don Marquis, *Wages*

himself from leadership influence and allow younger people to assume responsibility without his interference. He was also a very competent leader and I assume he could be autocratic with anyone who wanted to alter the content of *The Urantia Book*. Christy (Emma Christiansen, a member of the contact commission that received the Urantia Papers) told me that Harold Sherman wanted to enter material on extrasensory perception in the book and was categorically refused.

Even though I think that Martin Gardner's book contains many things which I think are erroneous and his evaluations with which I disagree, it is the first extensively researched public record of events surrounding the origin of *The Urantia Book* written by a person who is a skilled debunker and does everything possible to undermine credibility in its teachings. It is important in an open society to have such criticism available, and it helps prevent a cult mentality in the Urantia movement. The high spiritual quality of the Fifth Epochal Revelation will survive such attacks much as the spiritual truths of the Fourth Epochal Revelation survived the persecutions of the early Christian community.

A critical approach to *The Urantia Book*

We should encourage a critical approach to *The Urantia Book*. Since it purports to be the Fifth Epochal Revelation authored by supermortal personalities, it is important to have a clear

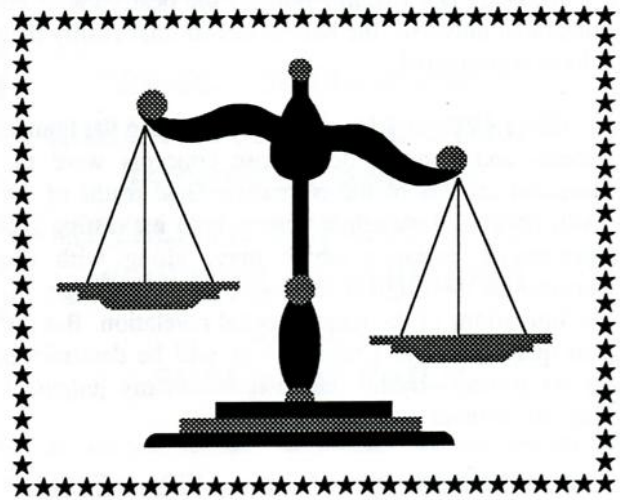
Saying so does not make it so!

understanding of the philosophical criteria of truth necessary in

evaluating such claim. First of all, claim or authority is not a philosophical criterion of truth. Secondly, knowing the origin and authorship of a book may give some insights, but it is not a philosophical criterion of truth. Whether supermortals or human beings wrote the book, it must be evaluated by the

*Man with his burning soul
Has but an hour of breath
To build a ship of Truth
In which his soul may sail
Sail on the sea of death
For death takes toll
Of beauty, courage, youth,
Of all but Truth*

John Masefield, *Truth*



quality of its content, not by what it claims, or who may have written it.

The central objective in evaluating *The Urantia Book* is to assess the quality of its spiritual truth and insight. This must be done by individuals using their total capacity to evaluate its philosophic coherence and experiential spiritual relevance. Is the spiritual quality and are the insights of the book inferior to, equal with, or superior to our traditional sources of spiritual truth?

Quality of content is what counts

During this period of testing, a consensus will gradually evolve regarding its quality. If the general opinion is negative, the book will fade away into obscurity. If the consensus is positive, continued evaluation will determine the level of its spiritual contribution. Is it just another useful spiritual resource, or does it have quality of revelation? My philosophic hypothesis is that if it has the spiritual quality of revelation, its influence will continue to grow in society throughout the world.

My personal view, after almost forty years of critical study and evaluation, is that *The Urantia Book* is of superior quality in at least four categories:

1. Its comprehensive view of Deity and Reality, including the Paradise Trinity.
2. The presentation of enlarged spiritual cosmology which is commensurate with our gigantic material astronomical cosmology.
3. An overview of a vast array of spiritual personalities that function in a hierarchical system of ability and power, which must exist if we are to make any sense of the spiritual cosmos.
4. And finally, a greatly expanded presentation of the life and teachings of Jesus, that is solidly rooted in the New Testament realities.

In short, *The Urantia Book* is the best view of an integrated universe, the best model of total reality that I have encountered.

Generations of scholars will be probing the human aspects and personalities whose concepts were the temporal carriers of the eternal spiritual truths of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. This is both interesting and appropriate research which may, along with the confines of the English language, shed some light on the limitations of the latest epochal revelation. But the real quality of *The Urantia Book* will be determined by its spiritual truths and insights. In my judgment they are without peer on our planet..

The Ascendancy of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

During the first forty years of its history the Urantia movement has evolved from a handful of readers in Chicago to hundreds of study groups and tens of thousands of readers throughout the world. Without mass publicity or promotion over 250,000 copies of *The Urantia Book* have been sold and translations are available in French, Spanish, and Finnish. Work continues on the Dutch and Russian translations, with editions of Korean, German, Swedish, Hungarian and Italian translations on the drawing board. Audio and computer versions of the book are available and numerous study aids have been published. Regional and International conferences are being held and secondary works are proliferating.

All this is impressive but of much greater importance is the tempering and structuring of the Urantia movement in preparation for its world-wide mission. The rugged struggle of these early years has established solid foundations for carrying a new paradigm of spiritual reality to humankind. The Urantia movement very early in its history has encountered most of the challenges that have

*I can not
change yesterday,
I can only make
the most of today,
and look with hope
toward tomorrow*



threatened religious transitions down through history. We have received an experiential vaccination against these viruses which have threatened creative spiritual growth in the past. The Fifth Epochal Revelation has demonstrated its dynamic power in steering the movement repeatedly through critical periods and controversial encounters in our journey.

Immunity now high

The Urantia movement has been confronted with centralized organizational control and we have witnessed the power of individual initiative and creative diversity to establish a pluralistic foundation for outreach ministry. We have escaped oligarchical-authoritarian direction in the triumph of participatory democracy and openness. We weathered the threat of legalistic-power strategies through the dominance of cooperative team work.

Soon after regional and national conferences were held, students of *The Urantia Book* were captivated and challenged by the intrigues of charismatic control of the Urantia movement. With the passing of time, we recognized the danger of charismatic influence and witnessed the emergence of evolutionary-rational decision-making. On the heels of this tempering experience, we were confronted by a more subtle form of charismatic influence in the captivating channeling movement among readers of *The Urantia Book*. Following the example of the Christian church in dealing with similar movements in its history, we have achieved the spiritual maturity to allow individual freedom to evaluate the authenticity of spiritual experience.

We are now entering the intellectual-spiritual struggle which took mainline Christianity centuries to largely resolve: distinguishing between the contemporary, fallible human carrier concepts used in revelation from its eternal spiritual truths. Martin Gardner's book, *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*,

may help to shorten this period in the Urantia movement. It may also help to guard against cult attitudes among those who have living faith in the enlarged spiritual truths of the Fifth Epochal Revelation.

The solid core of the Urantia movement has come through these tribulations with renewed dedication and balance. We have come of age. Spiritual freedom and participatory democracy have taught us there can be unity of purpose in the midst of intellectual and political diversity. The Fifth Epochal Revelation will make its way and overcome any barriers placed in its way. We are standing at the threshold of "one of the most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment" (U.B. p. 2082) on our planet. The preliminary, orienting growth developments of the Urantia movement are largely behind us. The potential of an exciting outreach mission of the Fifth Epochal Revelation is awaiting us. The Most Highs have prepared us and our planet for the most thrilling vision of spiritual reality since Jesus of Nazareth walked on our world. This outreach mission will be many-faceted, pluralistic, and victorious!

Reading *The Urantia Book* as a Religious Practice

David Kantor

One of the similarities which I see in the sequence of epochal revelations that are described in Paper 52, *Planetary Mortal Epochs*, is that each revelation provided mechanisms for expanding access to Deity. In doing so, they opened up new avenues of approach and provided more functional integration between evolving mortals and the agencies of celestial ministry.



**"BE NOT DISCOURAGED;
HUMAN EVOLUTION IS STILL IN
PROGRESS, AND THE
REVELATION OF GOD TO THE
WORLD, IN AND THROUGH
JESUS,
SHALL NOT FAIL."**

(2097)

My primary reason for reading *The Urantia Book* is that, if approached in a prayerful or worshipful attitude, it facilitates my personal encounter with God. The very act of reading becomes a symbolic approach to Deity—psychologically similar to any other symbolic ritual leading to encounter, such as making a pilgrimage to a holy place or participating in a remembrance supper.

This symbolic act of reading makes neither a religion nor a fetish out of the book, but recognizes it as a potent tool for bringing the individual into closer contact with planetary founts of spiritual ministry. Quotations that express the religious nature of my experience are:

- "Religion is the experiencing of divinity in the consciousness of a moral being of evolutionary origin; it represents true experience with the eternal realities in time, the realization of spiritual satisfactions while still in the flesh." (1104) This seems to happen to me when I prayerfully read the book!
- "The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by feelings or emotions, but in the realms of the highest and most spiritualized thinking. It is your thoughts, not your feelings, that lead you Godward...All such inner and spiritual communion is termed spiritual insight. Such religious experiences result from the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth as they function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God." (1104) This seems to explain what happens to me when I worshipfully read the book!
- "Religion lives and prospers...in the discovery of new and spiritual meanings in facts already well known to mankind." (1105) As I read this book

prayerfully, I am constantly discovering new, spiritual meanings in facts! This book is an extremely valuable component of my personal religious experience!

Personal conversations with hundreds of readers over the years confirm that I am not alone in having this kind of experience with the text. The significance of this experience for my own personal growth is what keeps bringing me back to the text, day after day, year after year, decade after decade. It provides more useful sustenance than anything else I have encountered in my limited but not insignificant encounters with universe reality. It has helped me to learn how to open the worship channel of spiritual communion and it helps me learn how to function more effectively in my social environment. My experience with this text is so profound that I want to be sure that anyone else who might be interested in having such an experience has unrestricted access to it.

It is the power of this symbolic act, the prayerful and worshipful reading of this text, which holds such great potential for facilitating the spiritual transformation of each individual as well as the social aggregations in which those individuals participate. It is as if a prayerful, worshipful reading of the text

On opening gateways

opens the gateway to the ministry of our unseen friends. Such reading creates an open channel

through which their ministry can pour into each individual and from thence into the world. Many readers have experienced a similar phenomenon in the social context of study groups. Jesus' description of the Kingdom helps us to understand the nature of this experience and helps us gain insight into how we can effectively socialize it, consistent with the broadening horizons of the personal universe which this text reveals.

*There is pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar;
I love not man the less, but Nature more,
From these our interviews.
Byron, Childe Harold, IV*

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
□
□ *The ultimate failures of dictatorship cost humanity far more than any temporary failures of democracy.* □
□
□ Franklin D. Roosevelt □
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

On restricting access to the text.

For a small group of readers to attempt to fabricate an air of authority for purposes of controlling and 'managing' the reactions of their fellows to this revelation reveals a level of insight which is shallow and superficial at best. Trying to establish and enforce an ideology which is designed to inhibit, restrict and control the reaction to this text is as rational as attempting to control a nuclear explosion by detonating it in a paper bag. The interaction between the spirit-indwelt, inquiring mind and the Fifth Epochal Revelation makes any policy of restricted access to the text both obscene and impossible of implementation. This revelation is the most powerful force to be liberated on the planet since Michael's bestowal of the Spirit of Truth. Can you imagine anyone having the audacity to attempt to control the functioning of the Spirit of Truth? Or trying to establish ideological constraints upon where and when it should be allowed to function?

On page 966, the revelators acknowledge the difficulty we face in a new and satisfying symbolism. They state that, "...the new symbolism must not only be significant for the group but also meaningful for the individual. The forms of any serviceable symbolism must be those which the individual can carry out on his own initiative, and which he can also enjoy with his fellows. If the new cult could only be dynamic instead of static, it might really contribute something worthwhile to the progress of mankind, both temporal and spiritual." Prayerfully reading *The Urantia Book* provides just such a satisfying symbolic approach to deity for many people!

The discussion of the appearance of a new cult continues with the comment that, "There must be the demand for devotion, the response of loyalty. Every effective religion develops a worthy symbolism, and its devotees would do well to prevent the crystallization of

such a ritual into cramping, deforming and stifling stereotyped ceremonials which can only handicap and retard all social, moral, and spiritual progress. No cult can survive if it retards moral growth and fails to foster spiritual progress. The cult is the skeletal structure around which grows the living and dynamic body of personal spiritual experience—true religion.”

With *The Urantia Book*, the Revelators have provided a masterfully conceived symbolism for the spiritual sustenance of humanity. If you appreciate the catalytic role the text plays in religious growth, and if you appreciate the text’s comments that the inevitable result of religious growth is a desire for service, and if you appreciate the way in

On the desire to serve

which the desire to serve

often results in an individual wanting that which is deemed to be of greatest value, perhaps you can then appreciate what a lost cause this ideology of restricted access really is. It is simply not consistent with the nature of the response the book itself says we can expect!

If the past forty years of events within the readership are a reliable indicator, the real challenge before us would seem to be that of helping each other to effectively socialize this new experience. We need to help each other to learn to adapt to the new psychological and spiritual realities encountered as a result of reading the text of this book.

Re-evaluating ways of introducing the book in accord with its teachings.

How, then, are we to responsibly spread the revelation in ‘accord with its teaching.’ If we are going to answer this question, we will be required to make sure that any strategy we suggest is at least consistent with the concept of reality presented in the text.

Each of the preceding epochal revelations provided humanity with additional tools for dealing with the planetary environment, tools to help us in our ascent from the bonds of biological and psychological determinism to a fuller understanding of techniques of the in-process-of-being-revealed universe of personality, meanings and values. The Prince’s regime provided education in a variety of domains. The

Adamic regime provided new genes for everyone, in addition to more education. Melchizedek highlighted the power of faith. Jesus empowered us by helping us to understand the personal nature of Deity and the immanently-present reality of the Kingdom. He also provided the Spirit of Truth as a substantial bonus. Each of these revelations, when assimilated by its recipients, provided additional empowerment for the tasks of personal and social evolution toward a greater degree of God-consciousness and adaptations to the trends of the cosmos. We might ask if there is any corollary with *The Urantia Book*—anything

here which can more effectively

On empowerment

empower us to deal with our planetary situation. I think the answer is ‘Yes!’ In addition to a comprehensive view of the nature and origin, history, and destiny, the book provides a revelation of the nature of Supremacy which should empower us to work effectively with our environment.

*Beloved, let us love one another:
for love is of God;
and every one that loveth is born
of God, and knoweth God.*

*He that loveth not, knoweth not God;
for God is love.
No man hath seen God at any time.
If we love one another,
God dwelleth in us,
and his love is perfected in us.*

*God is love;
he that dwelleth in love,
dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

*There is no fear in love;
but perfect love casteth out fear:
because fear hath torment.
He that feareth
is not made perfect in love.*

*We love him because he first loved us,
and this commandment,
we have from him,
he who loveth God,
loveth his brother also.*

First Epistle of John.

The nature of Supremacy is very nicely captured in philosopher Alfred North Whitehead’s description of each new moment as a “creative advance into novelty.” In Jesus’ terms, it is simply total commitment in all ways to the doing of the Father’s will—a conclusion reached during the forty day period he spent in evaluating how he should proceed with his life. In doing so, he settled upon a masterly technique which allows fresh empowerment within each new, novel moment. This is in sharp contrast to an ideology which presupposes that it ‘knows’ the optimum

configuration of future reality as well as the means of manipulating present reality in order to reach that optimum configuration. The life of Jesus clearly reveals the superiority of submission to the Father's will as contrasted with predetermined ideology as a method of advancing both individual and planetary progress.

Paper 99, *The Social Problems of Religion*, makes quite clear the impotence of ideology in dealing with the present situation. The argument for ideology is based on an assumption that the dynamics of reality are far more amenable to the positivistic methods of intervention and control than those of the personal universe we find revealed in *The Urantia Book*. Ideology assumes mechanism, a formula to achieve individual success and social progress; the book reveals living organism—an individual and personal, moment by moment, dedication to the doing of the Father's will.

Again we may ask the question, "How should we approach the challenge of introducing *The Urantia Book* in accordance with the view of reality that it sets forth?"

How should we introduce the book?

A personal philosophy of seeking the Father's will in each decision is the **only** way I see of functioning creatively within Supremacy, while remaining consistent with the view of reality set forth in the book. The task will be accomplished via the additive contribution that each individual makes to the process.

"Religionists must function in society...as individuals, not as groups, parties or institutions." (1087) Individuals thus oriented can create sequences of *particular occasions* (to use Whitehead's term) within the evolving supreme through which our spiritual benefactors are able to supply their ministry directly toward planetary uplift. The inevitable

Divine Love

*Thou hidden love of God, whose height
Whose depth unfathom'd, no man knows,
I see from far Thy bounteous light,
Inly I sigh for Thy repose;
My heart is pain'd, nor can it be
At rest, till it finds rest in Thee.*

John Wesley

*Ye, pure
Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;
Let that which ever operates and lives
Clasp you within the limits of its love;
And seize with sweet and melancholy
thoughts
The floating phantoms of its loveliness.*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

interference and distortion created by human institutions is kept to a minimum. from a process viewpoint, any attempt to apply institutional control through the enforcement of a particular ideology represents an illusory understanding of reality and is predestined to fail.

Is institutional control desirable?

Reality constantly metamorphoses into novel configurations that were unforeseen when the institutional or ideological structures were developed. When we have a growing number of individuals dedicated to seeking the Father's will in all things, and interacting in consultation and seeking group wisdom, we provide our spiritual benefactors with a fertile, growing field of *particular occasions* which can be utilized for purposes of the revelation. As we work to bring about the social coordination of these individuals, we help to mitigate the extremes of ultra-individualism as well as the wild fluctuations inherent when a few self-selected individuals try to control a dynamic system.

On mitigating the extremes

The challenge here is to keep the task of social coordination from becoming one of ideological control. This approach recognizes and attempts to harmonize with the locus of planetary spiritual ministry in the inner world of individuals and communities. The real frontiers become psychological and spiritual domains rather the domains of institutions which attempt to achieve a spiritual objective by manipulating social processes. Considering the loss of the external ministry infrastructure which would have been provided by the Prince's staff and the Adamic regime, can we look at the last three epochal revelations (Melchizedek, Jesus, and *The Urantia Book*) and postulate the fostering of an internal ministry structure consistent with the nature of Supremacy?

The concept that access to the Fifth Epochal Revelation needs to be limited and controlled seems

"Let him come" highly untenable in a society whose very lifeblood has become the free flow of information. And how can such views be reconciled with those expressed by the Master, "*The invitation is and always will be: Whosoever will, let him come and partake of the water of life.*" (1820) Can we imagine Jesus laying down criteria about who is and who is not ready or worthy to receive his revelation?

Our challenges are increasingly psychological and spiritual as we seek to orient ourselves to the service of God and our fellows in this world of Supremacy. How do we more clearly perceive the Father's will? How do we more wisely discern the difference between genuine spiritual guidance and expressions of our own psychological processes and social needs? How do we effect the social coordination of readers from radically different backgrounds, perspectives and levels of education?

Doing as he did These become the issues at the frontiers of growth and service. Jesus revealed to us the way in which to operate creatively for the Father's purposes in an environment of increasing complex, novel and unpredictable process—simply by doing as he did and living our lives fully dedicated to the discovery and the doing of the Father's will.

Cosmic Reflections

Ken Glasziou

In his book *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*, Martin Gardner has used all the tricks of his trade of debunking in his efforts to ridicule the science content of *The Urantia Book*. For example, from the late 1920's to the late 1950's, Wegener's theory of continental drift was held in disrepute among geologists, and particularly so in the USA. The theory proposed that approximately 200 million years ago, all the land masses of the earth were joined together and commenced to drift apart at that time. So if, as claimed by Gardner, Wilfred Kellogg and Dr Sadler were conspirators in the production of the Urantia Papers, why did they include an account of continental drift far exceeding Wegener's in its detail and nominating the time of commencement of drift at the vastly different date of 750 million years ago?

Gardner was aware that, by the 1980's, geologists

John said to Jesus: "Master, yesterday I went over to Ashtaroth to see a man who was teaching in your name and even claiming to be able to cast out devils. Now this fellow had never been with us, neither does he follow after us; therefore I forbade him to do such things." Then said Jesus:

"Forbid him not. Do you not perceive that this gospel of the kingdom shall presently be proclaimed in all the world? How can you expect that all who will believe the gospel shall be subject to your direction? Rejoice that already our teaching has begun to manifest itself beyond the bounds of our personal influence.

(1764)

had begun to shift Wegener's 'about 200 million years ago' proposal for commencement of breakup of a supercontinent to somewhere between 500 and 800 million years. He cannot deny his awareness since, in his book, he quotes from a paper on the science content of *The Urantia Book* which remarks on the book's claim for a 750 million years ago start of land mass break-up. Gardner attempts to divert attention from this remarkable "prediction" by claiming that Wegener's theory was acclaimed by some geologists in the early 1920's. Therefore, says Gardner, Dr Sadler must have written it into the book at that time, then could not remove it when the theory fell into disrepute because the Forum would have noticed the change. Note that elsewhere in his book, Gardner uses the opposite logic and claims that Dr Sadler added much new material. Apparently, the Forum no longer noticed alterations and deletions!

At the present time, geologists have now modified their views to a commencing time for drift at about 750 million years ago, the same as given in the Urantia Paper received in 1934. And now, in a letter to me dated November 21, 1995, Gardner acknowledges the convergence of those dates for commencement of drift but ignores their significance and again attempts to divert attention by referring to a statement in the book that 500 million years ago was the start of the long and slow westward drift of north and south America. Gardner says that this is twice the age assigned by geologists for this event.

However, once more Gardner has missed the boat. In the December issue (vol. 270, no. 5242) of the journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Science we read, "Geologists have been mystified by the wanderings of North America during a crucial period 500 million years ago, when many of the life forms known today were evolving. Now a chunk of crust in western Argentina is turning out to be North America's calling card. Dropped off in western South America nearly 500 million years ago, it pins down the errant North America to within a few thousand kilometers of South America's west coast."

Gardner goofs again

Quoting from Gardner's *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*: "The Life Carrier of Nebadon, assigned to Urantia, in his description of the Cambrian period (Paper 59, page 674), made a glaring mistake. He makes crustaceans such as shrimps, crabs and lobsters contemporaneous with trilobites, when actually the crustaceans appeared on Urantia much later. A few Urantians have tried to justify this howler by saying that it was a typing or printing error. The Life Carrier, they suggest, originally wrote, 'ancestors of crustaceans.' It seems far more likely that the author of the paper did some careless copying from a book on

historical geology."

Without implying that The Urantia Book's account of historical geology is, for the most part, anything other than being in line with mid-1930's opinions, let's correct the Gardner criticism. Modern historical geology refers to the period between 550 and 520 million years ago as "the Cambrian explosion" in which most of the basic body plans found in today's invertebrates appeared in an extraordinary burst of evolutionary change (J. Hecht, *New Scientist* 148 (No. 2006) 23 (1995)). An account of the current viewpoint appeared in *Time Magazine* vol 146 (23) 1995 that states, "Until about 600 million years ago, there were no organisms more complex than bacteria, multi-celled algae, and single celled plankton...Then, 543 million years ago, in the early Cambrian, within the span of no more than 10 million years, creatures with teeth and tentacles, claws and jaws materialized with the suddenness of apparitions. In a burst of creativity like nothing before or since, nature appears to have sketched out the blueprints for virtually the whole of the animal kingdom."

Since the trilobites did not become extinct until the very end of the Paleozoic, about 250 million years ago, it would appear then that trilobites and crustaceans were contemporaneous after all. Some howler!

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