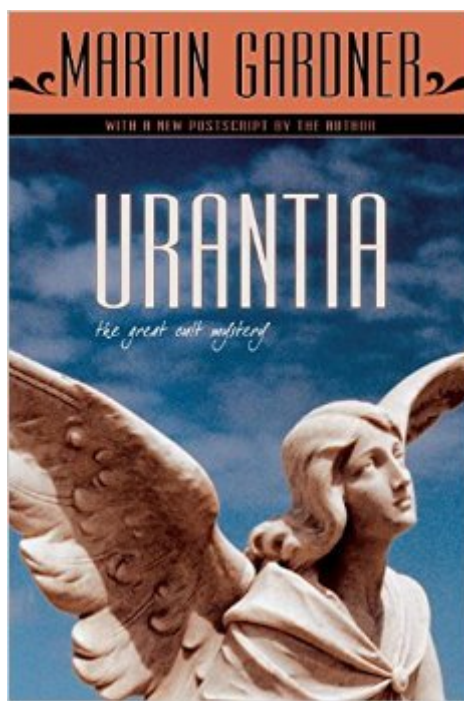


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Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery



Synopsis

Well-known skeptic and acclaimed popular science writer Martin Gardner presents a complete history of the Urantia movement, from its beginnings in the early 20th century to the present day. In addition to providing an outline of the Urantia cult's worldview, Gardner presents strong evidence to establish the identity of the man whose trancelike orations formed the basis of the book. Gardner also analyzes the flaws in Urantian science and points out many instances of plagiarism in various sections of the book. In a new postscript to this paperback edition, Gardner details recent developments in the Urantia movement, corrects some errors in the original edition, and responds to critical reactions from Urantia believers to his skeptical perspective on the book and the movement. Although there are other histories of The Urantia Book, this is the only one written by a skeptic. Anyone interested in the New Age, cults, or the development of new religions will find much fascinating material in Gardner's thorough overview.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Martin Gardner's book entitled URANTIA: The Great Cult Mystery is a skeptic's critique of The URANTIA Book (UB), a 2097-page compilation of several papers allegedly authored by several 'divine revelators,' each one claiming to be a representative of God's vast celestial hierarchy. These 'authors' were commissioned by their heavenly 'supervisors' to enlighten the inhabitants of this planet (which they call Urantia) as to how mankind has been supposedly misled throughout human history by the errors of religious thinking. The primary target for which the UB 'authors' claim is in

need of 'correction' in the arena of religion is the Bible, with all its misconceptions regarding the nature of God, who Jesus was, etc. Mr. Gardner, although not a Bible-believer himself, finds it difficult to accept the truth-claims that these alleged celestial authors present, in light of several factors. To begin with, Gardner takes exception to the many scientific errors to be discovered within the pages of the UB. He devotes two full chapters of his book to illustrate portions of the UB's vast science content which have been rendered outdated because of discoveries made since its publication in 1955. In some cases, the science content became outdated even before the UB was published, and in still others, the purported scientific 'facts' were already incongruent with the science of the time, which can only be attributed as outright errors on the part of these alleged higher minds! Why would these divine revelators allow the publishing of such self-damning evidence?

Even though Gardner's book is fairly formidable (445 pages; 1.7 pounds), do yourself a favor and read it before you buy and read the Urantia Book (2,097 pages; 4.3 pounds, per Gardner). By doing so, you will hopefully save the cost of buying, the time spent reading, and, most importantly, avoid a possible commitment to the Urantia Book. I first ran across the Urantia Book (UB) in 1973, bought it and spent months of careful reading before finishing it in early 1974. At that time I got rid of the UB because I felt that, although unconventional, it was essentially Christian and capable of only producing yet another Christian sect, and was therefore limited in perspective and usefulness. The racial and religious prejudices, spread throughout the book but concentrated especially in the Jesus papers, were obvious, and likely not the product of those with a comprehensive view of the world, as assumed by the UB's purported cosmic authors. Because of the UB's complexity and obviously Christian focus, I concluded at the time that the source must be, say, a very cynical Christian mathematician. Although I have not paid much attention to the UB for the last 30 years, I was very interested to recently run across Gardner's book in the library and to find that my initial reaction to the UB had some elements of truth. From Gardner's book, I learned that the authors of the UB, or at least its editors/compilers, were from a strong Christian (Seventh Day Adventist) background. Also, to date, approximately 50% of the UB has been shown to be directly copied or summarized from a variety of early 20th century religious, scientific, sociological, and historical publications that were available to UB authors prior to its publication in 1955.

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