

"A Friendly Church in a Friendly City"

## Trinity Presbyterian Church

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SAN FRANCISCO 10, CALIFORNIA

March 9, 1959

Dr. Earl L. Douglass  
C/o The Hilton Hotel  
Los Angeles  
Calif.

Dear Earl,

Your letter of March 1 has just come. I share your disappointment that Los Angeles is not closer to San Francisco.

Was interested to hear of your visit with Dr. Sadler and Miss Rowley. It is a pleasure that I have not thus far had except by correspondence. However, I do keep studying the Urantia Book which I consider in itself a remarkable phenomenon. The author (or authors) of the book have not hesitated to "stick their necks out" in so many areas of human knowledge that a critical analysis of the book should eventually supply a verdict of true or false.

It seems to me that, if I were God, this is the sort of book which I would want to supply my human children on such a benighted and remote speck of dust as the earth. Yet, the best and highest service which can be rendered this book is a strictly objective and merciless critical analysis thereof.

As I read what it has to say about cosmology, cosmogeny, geology, chronology, biology, anthropology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, nuclear physics, etc. etc., I find myself wishing that I had considerably more competence in all of these fields. But I know that I had better stick to my own field of competence which happens to be Biblical studies. In passing, I note a few statements outside of my field of competence which I am inclined to challenge. On page 477, for instance, is this statement: "There are just 100 distinguishable atomic materializations of space-energy in a dual universe; that is the maximum possible organization of matter in Nebodon." This seems to me to say that only 100 chemical elements are possible. But I can quote several authorities to the effect that at least 103 elements have been identified and named.

However, returning to the field of Biblical studies, I make the following observations:

- (1) Page 2074. The teacher of Clement of Alexandria and the founder of the famous Catechetical School of that city was "Pantaenus" not "Poutaenus".  
(This may be merely a typographical error.)
- (2) Page 1557. Philip the Apostle is identified with Philip the Evangelist (or Deacon) who is said to have gone on the mission to Samaria in Acts 8:5.
- (3) Pages 2057-60. The bestowing of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is represented as occurring of the

same day as the ascension and 40 days after the crucifixion. Now this is an obvious error as the very word "Pentecost" means 50 and was supposed to be a week of weeks after the Passover.

(4) Page 542. A quotation from the New Testament Book of Hebrews is attributed to Paul. This is amazing in view of the generally sophisticated and critical attitude toward the authorship of most of the books of the Bible. (E.G. pp. 1341-2)

(5) Page 1559. Nathaniel's father is said to be Bartholemew. But Bartholemew is listed by the synoptic writers among the Twelve. It is a patronymic meaning "The Son of Tholmai". Thus it is logical to suppose that Nathaniel of John's Gospel is identical with Bartholemew of the synoptics, and that his father's name was Tholmai.

(6) Page 1362. The synagogue teacher is spoken of as the "chazan." The Hebrew (Aramaic) for this officer is  $\text{חזן}$  which would be more correctly transliterated "chazzan?" (with a double z).

(7) Page 1363 (near bottom) "Far to the east they could discern the Jordan valley and, far beyond, the rocky hills of Moab." But the rocky hills of Moab were not east of Nazareth but east of the Dead Sea.

(8) Page 1648. "Early on the morning of Tuesday, March 30, Jesus and the apostolic party started on their journey to Jerusalem for the Passover." But Hastings Bible Dictionary, Vol. I, p. 411 gives a table which shows that the latest possible date for the Passover in A.D. 28 was Tuesday, March 30 (beginning with sunset the previous day, Mon., March 29). Thus Jesus and His apostles are represented as setting out for Jerusalem and the Passover on the latest possible date for the Passover to begin. They arrived at Bethany on April 2, three days later. By this time the ceremonies of the Passover Feast and the first-fruits of the Barley harvest "waved" before the Lord would have been completed. True, the Feast of Unleavened Bread would go on for another three or four days, but it seems strange that they would deliberately be so late in arriving.

It is only fair to note that the Urantia Book does not claim to be infallible (p. 1008). It is also fair to note that on the other side of the ledger are literally thousands of amazingly accurate details harmonizing perfectly with known geographical and chronological facts. For instance, the U.S. states in opposition to a tremendous weight of tradition that Jesus did not die on Passover Day, but on the day preceding, that, in 30 A.D., Passover began at Sunset on Friday, April 7 and continued until sunset, Saturday, April 8. This agrees with the point-of-view of John's Gospel but disagrees with the synoptics. Moreover, astronomy bears witness that the first visibility of the preceding new moon was at sunset on Friday, March 24. This would then be the beginning of Nisan 1 in the Jewish calendar. This would bring Nisan 14, the "Preparation for the Passover," to the day beginning sunset April 6 (Thurs.) and Nisan 15, the Passover itself to the day beginning at sunset on Friday, April 7, continuing through Saturday. This agrees with the Gospel of John and the Urantia Book.

3.

No doubt many more discrepancies will be discovered in the Urantia Book. About all that this will prove is that even "midway creatures" can make mistakes. But, if for each mistake we are able to spot, we are enriched by 1,000 thrilling new facts, then we have a spiritual gold mine before us in the Urantia Book, and the ore we dig out assays at about 999/1,000. We do well not to accept it blindly, but it merits a considerable measure of our confidence.

Mrs. Adams joins me in extending our best wishes to you and your wife. We have now completed eight years in this difficult inner city church. During this period we have had the pleasure of taking into the church 289 new members. The turnover has been so great that we only have 282 members as of now. Yet we have prospered by the grace of God, and I now have a full-time assistant with an Italian name (Rev. Richard Fagetti) who I think is well-qualified to carry on.

If you know of anyone in New Jersey who would like an experienced Minister of Visitation, I wish you would let me know, -- perhaps even speak a good word for me. I think I could do a good job for some one in helping to build up their membership.

Most cordially yours,

Benjamin N. Adams