



# SOME HUMAN SOURCES OF THE URANTIA BOOK

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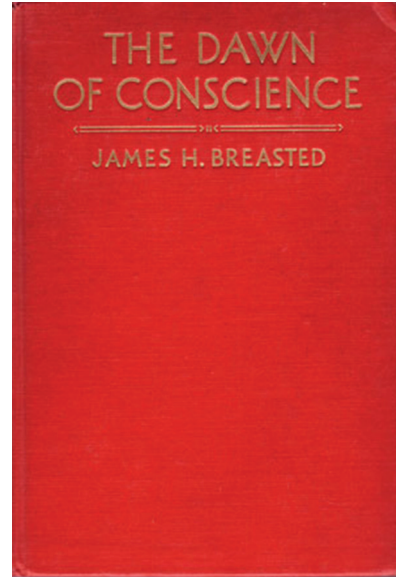
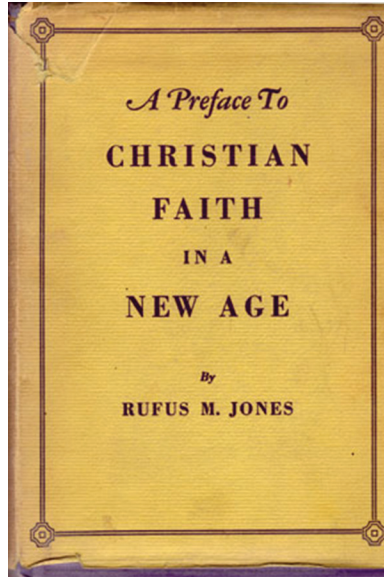
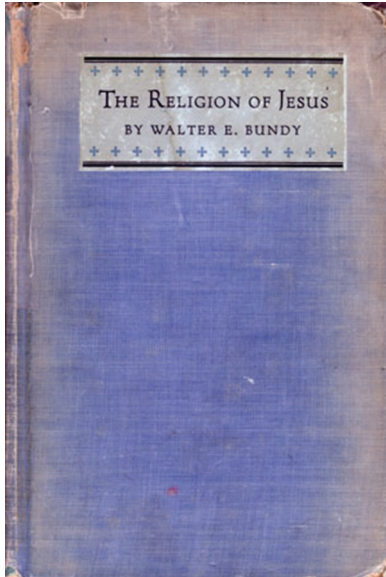
**T**HE AUTHORS OF THE URANTIA BOOK acknowledge the importance of using human sources wherever possible in presenting new revelation. On pages 16 and 17 of the Foreword they tell us:

We may resort to pure revelation only when the concept of presentation has had no adequate previous expression by the human mind.

Successive planetary revelations of divine truth invariably embrace the highest existing concepts of spiritual values as a part of the new and enhanced coordination of planetary knowledge. Accordingly, in making these presentations about God and his universe associates, we have selected as the basis of these papers more than one thousand human concepts representing the highest and most advanced planetary knowledge of spiritual values and universe meanings. Wherein these human concepts, assembled from the God-knowing mortals of the past and the present, are inadequate to portray the truth as we are directed to reveal it, we will unhesitatingly supplement them, for this purpose drawing upon our own superior knowledge of the reality and divinity of the Paradise Deities and their transcendent residential universe.

The director of the commission authorized to present the life and teachings of Jesus, which is recorded in the last section of the Urantia Book, informs us:

In carrying out my commission to restate the teachings and retell the doings of Jesus of Nazareth, I have drawn freely upon all sources of record and planetary information . . . As far as possible I have derived my information from purely human sources. Only when such sources failed,



have I resorted to those records which are superhuman . . . The memoranda which I have collected . . . embrace thought gems and superior concepts of Jesus's teachings assembled from more than two thousand human beings . . . in many ways I have served more as a collector and editor than as an original narrator. (p. 1343)

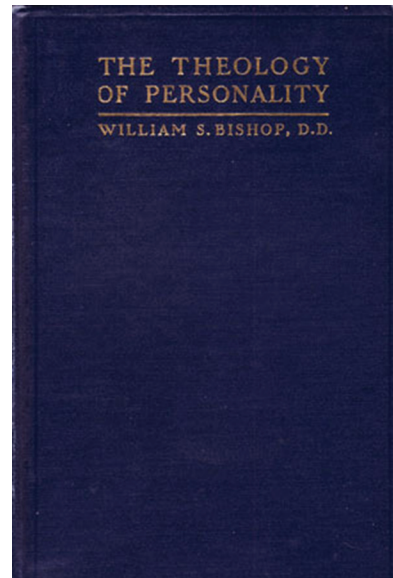
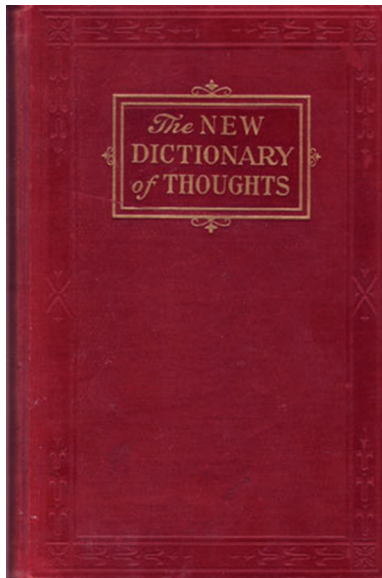
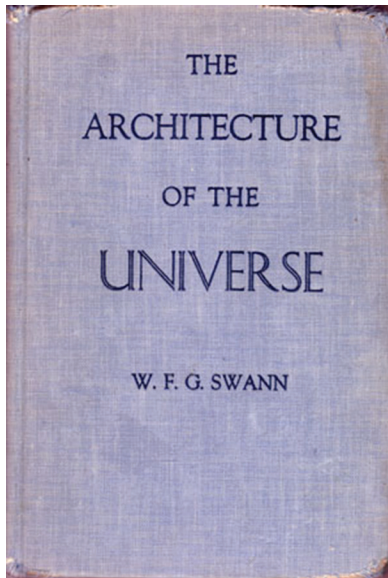
Many students of the Urantia Book have been intrigued by these references to human sources and have sought to track these sources down. Until recently, however, the findings were meager, consisting mainly of passages from the world's sacred scriptures. A few modern books had been identified as sources (e.g. *The Religion of Jesus* by Walter E. Bundy, *A Preface to Christian Faith in a New Age* by Rufus M. Jones and *The Dawn of Conscience* by James Henry Breasted), but not enough to prove that books had figured largely among the sources of record and planetary information alluded to by the revelators. Most readers have supposed that the revelators accessed some sort of celestial concept registry or memory bank to locate appropriate human concepts and expressions, only drawing on published sources in exceptional cases.

in 1991 a couple of groups of Urantia Book readers decided, independently of each other,

to collect all the human sources found so far. As a member of one of these groups, I took on the task of reading the above mentioned books carefully in order to glean all the parallel passages. As I read, I began to see that the parallels were far more extensive than previously realized. This led me to surmise that the revelators' use of books was not so extraordinary after all.

A few months later, while doing research for a paper on the Urantia Book's treatment of race and eugenics, I happened upon E. V. Cowdry's *Human Biology and Racial Welfare*. Published in 1930, this book turned out to be another unmistakable source. This discovery, which occurred in the spring of 1992, spurred me on to conduct a concentrated search for other source books.

Below is a list of nineteen books which comprise the sources I have collected so far. All of these books, with a few exceptions noted in the list, contain sentences, paragraphs, or even whole chapters whose phrasings and organization of thoughts or information are so closely paralleled in the Urantia Book as to strongly suggest their use as source materials by the revelators. Most were discovered in libraries and used book stores in the Chicago area during the spring, summer, and fall of 1992, in the course of my research.



The research, so far, has been very fruitful mainly because none of these books were obscure. They were all written by authorities in their respective fields, often by professors from prominent American universities, and many were reviewed in the popular and academic press. The book titles themselves were often giveaways; by their very titles, for instance, I targeted *Purposive Evolution* and *The Architecture of the Universe* (listed below) as likely primary sources. It is quite probable that many more books by American scholars of the early 20th century will be identified as sources. It may also be that writings from other periods and milieus will prove to be similarly rich in source materials.

These books cover many fields, including religion, philosophy, archaeology, physics, astronomy, and history. The revelators explicitly acknowledge using the highest human concepts and insights pertaining to God and the seven superuniverses (p. 17) and to the life and teachings of Jesus (p. 1343). But it seems strictly in keeping with their purposes to cull from other areas as well, since mention is made on p. 1123 that: "Revelation unifies history, coordinates geology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, sociology, and psychology." In their effort to produce a "new and enhanced coordination of planetary knowledge" (p. 17), involving the

unification and integration of religion, science, and philosophy, it makes sense that the revelators would incorporate human understandings in all of these areas.

So far I have traced parallels in about fifty of the Urantia Papers. One book alone, *Origin and Evolution of Religion* by Yale professor E. Washburn Hopkins, figures in twelve. I estimate that writings published before 1936 are used in about one-third of Parts I and II and in at least two-thirds of Parts III and IV. Most of these works will probably be found within the next few years. Eventually we will be able to map out the whole Urantia Book according to which parts are original with the book and which are not. And, again, this will not be too difficult since the revelators, while studiously avoiding word-for-word borrowings, made no attempt to disguise their sources by departing widely from the original human expressions.

Clearly, these findings are of great importance to serious Urantia Book readers. In addition to providing further substantiation of the revelators' acknowledgments, they spark new insights into what this revelation really is, and how human and superhuman voices and viewpoints interface in its production. As we gain a better grasp of how original it is (in its function as pure revelation), and how derivative it is (in



its function of presenting superhuman restatements of human concepts and expressions), we will be better able to see how the revelation positions itself with regard to evolutionary human knowledge, wisdom, and faith.

My own experience has taught me that, as a result of my former ignorance and underestimation of early 20th century thought, my sense of this positioning had been skewed. If unfamiliar with a concept or a piece of information presented in the papers —especially if it struck me as uncommonly beautiful, brilliant, or incisive—I would usually assume it was original with the Urantia Book, little realizing that it might have been known or expressed in some form or other, by some people of earlier generations. But in becoming more familiar with thought trends of that period and others, and with the discovery of more human sources, I've come to a better appreciation of the higher reaches of human thought reflected in the book, and can now begin to give the book's human side its proper due.

Along with this heightened recognition of the book's human component has come an awareness of how brilliantly the revelators reworked these sources to serve their own purposes. In comparing the source materials with the corresponding passages in the Urantia Book, I am continually struck by the presenters' ingenious ability to seamlessly integrate human observations with revelatory supplementation or correction. Time and again they prove themselves deft and creative editors, performing the difficult task of remaining true to the original expression while at the same time slightly altering it to make the reworded sentence(s) more congruent with revealed teachings.

One illustration of this technique will suffice for the purposes of the present essay. In his discussion of chemical elements, W. F. G. Swann writes on page 64 of *The Architecture of the Universe*:

Starting from any one of them [i.e., chemical elements], and noting some property such as the melting point, for example, the property would change as we went along

the row, but as we continued it would gradually come back to the condition very similar to that which we started ... The eighth element was in many respects like the first, the ninth like the second, the tenth like the third, and so on. Such a slate of affairs point[s] not only to a varied internal structure, but also to a certain harmony in that variation suggestive of some organized plan in building the atom.

Compare this with the parallel passage on p. 480 of the Urantia Book:

Starting from any one element, after noting some one property, such a quality will exchange for six consecutive elements, but on reaching the eighth, it tends to reappear, that is, the eighth chemically active element resembles the first, the ninth the second, and so on. Such a fact of the physical world unmistakably points to the sevenfold constitution of ancestral energy and is indicative of the fundamental reality of the sevenfold diversity of the creations of time and space.

Notice the care and elegance with which the second passage is restated. While retaining the original sentence structures and using similar wordings, the superhuman presenter departs from the speculative tone of Swann's last clause, inserting a revealed statement of decisive significance in its place. Scores of other examples of this technique appear in the books listed below; their cumulative effect is truly astounding. Other patterns of referencing, equally ingenious, are also discernible; these will be brought forward in later essays. (In this connection, it should be noted that in the listings, when I describe passages in some of the books as being "reproduced with little change" or "lightly rewritten," etc., the changes may be small in form but quite significant in substance.)

It must also be noted that these books have sometimes been of great help in further understanding the papers that use them. Often the presenters are obliged to present an abbreviated

treatment of a concept or a history which is discussed at greater length in the human source. For instance, my understanding of the book's puzzling allusion to "cosmic self-maintenance" (p. 482) was greatly enhanced when I came upon this concept presented at length in the Noble book (see below). In light of these benefits to the comprehension of both content and context, I feel it would be helpful for the readership to be made aware of these sources, and perhaps some of these books with expired copyrights could be republished. It would also be very helpful to scholars who will someday be critically examining the Urantia Book.

The following listings are necessarily brief

and incomplete. In the coming months I intend to analyze some of these books at greater length, detailing the often ingenious ways the revelators make use of them. My main goals in each of the essays will be: (1) to lay out the parallels between the book in question and the Urantia Book, (2) to show how the superhuman presenters enhanced the human statements with revelatory information or insights, and (3) to see whether and how the books shed light on the corresponding passages in the Urantia Book. In the meantime, I and other readers will be on the lookout for more human sources. If anyone knows of books not included in this list, I would be very grateful to hear from you.

### Source List as of December 1992

1. Aston, W. G. 1905. *Shinto (The Way of the Gods)*. Longmans, Green, and Co., New York. (Paper 131, "The World's Religions," section 7.) Sentences from Aston's translation of the "Wa Rongo" collection of Shinto Oracles, lightly rewritten or paraphrased, constitute the entire selection of Ganid's abstract of Shinto.
2. Bishop, William Samuel. 1926. *The Theology of Personality*. Longmans, Green, and Co., New York. (Foreword, section XII; Paper 106, Universe Levels of Reality, section 8.) Though there appears to be no superhuman lifting of content here, Bishop uses the terms "trinity," "triunity," "and—amazingly—"A Trinity of Trinities"; in the exposition of his constructive theology. These terms are completely reworked in the UB.
3. Breasted, James Henry. 1933. *The Dawn of Conscience*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. (Paper 95, "The Melchizedek Teachings in the Levant," sections 2-5; Paper 111 "The Adjuster and the Soul," preamble.) Breasted's analysis and assessments of early Egyptian social idealism and religion—including the teachings of Amenemope and Ikhnaton, the ka and the ha, Egypt's influence on the Hebrews, etc.—are incorporated into the UB's corresponding discussions.
4. Bundy, Walter E. 1928. *The Religion of Jesus*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis. (Paper 196, "The Faith of Jesus," preamble, sections 1-2; etc.) Portions from every chapter of this book, whose thesis is that the human Jesus founded the religion of personal experience and that we must recover the religion of Jesus from the religion about Jesus, are deftly concentrated in Paper 196 with the retention of many of Bundy's exact wordings.
5. Bundy, Walter E. 1929. *Our Recovery of Jesus*. The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis. (Paper 196, "The Faith of Jesus," preamble, sections 1-2.) A companion volume to the preceding book, this one has material that parallels paragraphs in Paper 196 which were not paralleled by the preceding one. The two books together supply about 95% of the basis of the preamble and the first two sections. The last section differs in tone and content and may be original with the midwayers.

6. Burton, Ernest DeWitt and Mathews, Shailer. 1901, 1927. *The Life of Christ*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. (Part IV, passim.) The content of this book does not appear to be used but rather its chapter and section titles. Parallel titles include: “The Crisis at Capernaum,” “Discourse on Spiritual Freedom,” “The Widespread Fame of Jesus (Christ),” “The Man with the Withered Hand,” “The Woman Taken in Adultery,” and “(More) Parables by the Sea.”
7. Cowdry, E. V, editor. 1930. *Human Biology & Racial Welfare*. Paul B Hoeber, Inc., New York. (Paper 51, “The Planetary Adams,” section 4; Paper 65 “The Overcontrol of Evolution,” section 2; Paper 82 “The Evolution of Marriage,” section 6; etc.) The revelators tacitly reference essays by Hrdlicka, Conklin and Davenport in their discussions of race differences, the dangers and benefits of race mixing and the feasibility of a modest eugenics program.
8. Edwards, Tryon, original compiler, 1890-1934 and later. *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*. Classic Publishing Co., London & New York. (Paper 48 “The Morontia Life,” section 7.) The vast majority of the 28 “statements of human philosophy” in the Morontia Mota section are taken well-nigh consecutively from the first 35 Pages of this 750-page book, which is arranged alphabetically by subject. The subjects from which the revelators cull quotations include: Ability, Accident, Action, Adversity, Affectation, Affliction, Anger, Anxiety, Art, Aspiration. These quotes are usually not reproduced verbatim in the UB but are recast so as to have a more cosmic and spiritual tone. [To read Matthew Block’s extensive study of these parallels, click [here](#) and [here](#).]
9. Fosdick, Harry Emerson. 1933. *The Hope of the World*. Harper and Brothers, New York & London. (Paper 171, “On the Way to Jerusalem,” section 7.) “Goodness is effective only when it is attractive,” on p. 18 is the essence of Fosdick’s sermon “The Fine Art of Making Goodness Attractive.”
10. Frost Jr., S.E., compiler and editor. 1943. *The Sacred Writings of the World’s Great Religions*. The New Home Library, New York. (Paper 131 “The World’s Religions.”) This book is a selection from previous—and, unfortunately, uncited—translations of various holy books. The UB appears to use the same translations of the Jain, Zoroastrian and Confucian writings as Frost, as well as the Aston Shinto translation. There is a remarkable degree of overlap in the passages selected in the two books.
11. Hartshorne, Charles. 1941. *Man’s Vision of God*. Willett, Clark and Co., Chicago. (Foreword, section 1.) Hartshorne’s list of the seven conceivable types of perfection is reproduced almost verbatim on p. 3 of the UB. I suspect that Hartshorne published an earlier (pre-1936) presentation of this system in a journal, so it may already have been in print before the Foreword was written.
12. Hopkins, E. Washburn. 1923. *Origin and Evolution of Religion*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT. The whole of Paper 85, “The Origins of Worship,” is derived directly from the first several chapters of this book, each section in the paper corresponding almost exactly to a chapter in the book. Paper 92, “The Later Evolution of Religion,” incorporates some of Hopkins’ comments, as do Papers 90 and 96; and the preamble and section 1 of Paper 104, “Growth of the Trinity Concept,” are based directly on Hopkins’ chapters on “The Triad,” “The Hindu Trinity,” “The Buddhistic Trinity,” and “The Christian Trinity.”
13. Jones, Rufus M. 1932. *A Preface to Christian Faith in a New Age*. Macmillan Co., New York. (Paper 195, “After Pentecost,” sections 5-10.) Every chapter of the book is used in the revelators’ discussions of Christianity’s struggle to awaken to its spiritual mission in the face of modern secu-

larism and its own institutional shortcomings. Virtually every paragraph of Section 10 (The Future) is drawn consecutively from the last half of this book.

14. Jones, Rufus M. 1916. *The Inner Life*. Macmillan Co., New York. (Paper 102, “The Foundations of Religious Faith,” preamble). Jones quotes the same two extracts of Bertrand Russell’s “A Free Man’s Worship” (1903), which the Melchizedek paraphrases in the first two paragraphs of the paper. Both Jones and the Melchizedek use these passages to illustrate materialistic despair, which can only be remedied by faith in God and a spiritual interpretation of the universe.

15. Noble, Edmund. 1926. *Purposive Evolution: The Link Between Science and Religion*. Henry Holt and Co., New York. (Paper 42, “Energy—Mind and Matter,” section 11; Paper 116, “The Almighty Supreme,” section 7.) Noble’s theory of cosmic self-maintenance (the universe as purposive) is referred to in the UB on p. 482; his chapter “Is the Universe an Organism?” (in which he gives a negative answer) seems to be responded to by the revelators on p. 1276-77: “The Living Organism of the Grand Universe.”

16. Osborn, Henry Fairfield. 1928. *Man Rises to Parnassus: Critical Epochs in the Prehistory of Man*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. (Paper 64, “The Evolutionary Races of Color,” sections 2, 4; Paper 80, “Andite Expansion in the Occident,” sections 3, 8, 9; etc.) This book seems to be the prime source for the UB’s discussion of the successive human races in Europe from the Foxhall Peoples to the Neanderthals, the cro-Magnons and the ancestors of the Nordics. The UB largely adheres to Osborn’s geological, racial and cultural chronologies and to his characterizations of the cultures of these various peoples. Osborn’s discussion of the Bretons is paralleled exactly on p. 899 of the UB.

17. Palmer, George Herbert. 1930. *The Autobiography of a Philosopher*. Greenwood Press reprint, New York, 1968) (Paper 181, “Final Admonitions and Warnings,” section 1.) Palmer’s assertion of the superiority of the inner peace resulting from faith in the Father’s loving care, over the “two inferior forms of hardihood” (optimism and stoicism), is paralleled in the UB’s discussion on pgs. 1954-55.

18. Sabatier, Auguste. 1904. *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*. McClure, Phillips & Co., New York. (Paper 155, “Fleeing Through Northern Galilee,” sections 5 & 6.) The sections in the UB on “The Discourses on True Religion”—which distinguish the religions of authority from the religion of the spirit—are an amplification of Sabatier’s thesis. The UB’s listing of the “three manifestations of the religious urge” on p. 1728 correspond to Sabatier’s “Three Degrees of Religious Evolution.” Sabatier’s book was quite influential; both Rufus Jones and Walter Bundy, among others, refer to the religions of authority and the religion of the spirit, attributing the origin of the latter to Jesus, as does Sabatier.

19. Swann, W.F.G. 1934. *The Architecture of the Universe*. The Macmillan Co., New York. (Paper 41, “Physical Aspects of the Local Universe”; Paper 42, “Energy—Mind and Matter,” passim. Parts of Swann’s opening chapter on “The Dogmas of Natural Philosophy” are reproduced with little change in section 9 (“Natural Philosophy”) of Energy—Mind and Matter. Many of his temperature, size and distance estimates relating to intra-atomic and astronomic bodies are used in the UB as are several of his analogies and illustrations (e.g., if the volume of a proton should be magnified to the size of a head of a pin, then, in comparison, a pin’s head would attain a diameter equal to that of the earth’s orbit around the sun.)



## Interweaving the Human and the Divine

These findings are leading to the realization that the Urantia Book is the product of a masterful interweaving of human and superhuman perspectives and insights. The warp of the text was supplied, in the main, by the progressive lines of religious and scientific thought of the early 20th century. This period was in many ways a great age of expanding horizons and enlarging concepts; many progressive thinkers — including several in the list above — were beginning to perceive and assert the interrelatedness of science, philosophy, and spiritual insight. This burgeoning sense of cosmic unity was abruptly eclipsed by the Second World War, which cast a cloud of skepticism and chastened hopes in its wake. But this eclipse was only temporary, and the quest for the realization of cosmic unity is again being taken up by progressive and creative people in society today.

The woof of the text was supplied by the superstructure of revelatory themes and concepts which coordinate and unify the human evolutionary insights. New and original information touching on origins, history, and destinies are introduced to shed light on the true meaning and import of evolutionary perceptions, as well as to provide answers to questions which logically arose from these perceptions.

One probable reason that the human sources were left undisguised was to enable students to discern, through comparative analysis, how this coordination of planetary knowledge was actually effected. As mentioned above, the initial analyses have already proved tremendously illuminating in this regard. Another reason was to keep us aware of the book's anchorage in a specific time and place. While a very large part of the book is of timeless value and perennial applicability, some of its discussions directly address and respond to the world situation of the early 20th century. Thus, every generation will

have to determine the relevance and applicability of certain of the book's teachings to its own situation.

Emerging from all these discoveries is the gratifying realization that the Urantia Book is exactly what its authors claim it to be. In their discussions of what true revelation is, the authors completely disavow certain traditional connotations such as oracles falling from the sky, or infallible prophecies written in stone. Rather, in characterizing authentic revelation, they state:

The proof that revelation is revelation is this same fact of human experience: the fact that revelation does synthesize the apparently divergent sciences of nature and the theology of religion into a consistent and logical universe philosophy, a coordinated and unbroken explanation of both science and religion, thus creating a harmony of mind and 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. (p. 1106)

In this passage, the Urantia Book captures the essence of its own magnificent achievement, an achievement which is truly without peer or precedent in the history of the world.

For more of Matthew Block's Urantia Book source studies, please visit his website:

**[UrantiaBookSources.com](http://UrantiaBookSources.com)**





### Postscript 2003

In the ten years since this article was written, I have found over one hundred more source texts, and no longer consider several of the books in the above list to be sources. These include:

Aston's *Shinto: The Way of the Gods* and Frost's *The Sacred Writings of the World's Great Religions*. Robert Ernest Hume's selection of religious scriptures, *Treasure-House of the Living Religions* (1931), includes all the matching material in Aston and Frost and is the obvious source of Paper 131.

Fosdick's *The Hope of the World*. Francis Greenwood Peabody's 1905 book, *Jesus Christ and the Christian Character*, includes a discussion of goodness and attractiveness and parallels several other statements in 171:7.

Jones's *The Inner Life*. John Baillie's 1929 *The Interpretation of Religion* is the evident source for the preamble and a few other sections in Paper 102. Like Jones, Baillie cites Russell but, unlike Jones, carries the discussion forward in a way that closely parallels the UB's ensuing remarks.

Noble's *Purposive Evolution*. J. E. Turner's *Personality and Reality* (1926) is the obvious source of 42:11. He too advances the theory of cosmic self-maintenance, but his text corresponds with the UB more closely and extensively.

—Matthew Block, January 2003