



A New, Indestructible Replica of the 1955 Plates of *The Urantia Book*

Reasonable minds can disagree, but when we learned that Urantia Foundation altered and later destroyed the plates that printed the original 1955 publication of *The Urantia Book*, many Urantians believed it was a mistake. Although the Foundation maintained three copies of the first printing, in 1967 they began to print a different text without any indication (such as footnotes or endnotes) of the several editorial revisions that were made. These changes (beginning with the second printing) were minor and did not compromise the philosophy of the Urantia Papers. However, many of us felt future scholars and students would require the readily available, inviolate version of the text.

It was not until the early nineties that Urantia Foundation admitted that changes had been made to the text of *The Urantia Book* after the first printing and offered a partial list of them to readers. But, by then they had produced many different printings, and none of them exactly matched the 1955 printing. Since Urantia Foundation elected to destroy the original plates, first printings have become difficult to find, and even used copies are quite expensive and getting more so.

The Plates are Reborn in Digital Cyberspace

Thanks to modern technology, a new keeper of the text has emerged. The first printing of *The Urantia Book* from the original plates has been scanned, made into digital files, and is now available for free download. Moreover, if Urantians want this exact replica of the 1955 text in printed form, they can purchase it (in two volumes) at a reasonable cost. Here is the website:

<http://www.guardianplates.com/guardianplatesviewer/index.html>

The Guardian Plates website is independently maintained online by a small group of concerned individuals for safekeeping and universal access in perpetuity to the original Urantia Book. These persons choose to remain anonymous. They do not want any human names associated with the Book. To me, these individuals are Urantian heroes.

So, Who Needs a First Printing?

Scholars and serious students will surely want this replica of the original version of the Urantia Papers. Casual readers seem to be generally content with the modified text since the editorial changes, although numerous, are minor and do not constitute malicious tampering or a philosophical alteration of the Urantia Revelation.

However, some of us Urantians tend to be cranky about the changes. We believe Urantia Foundation was established to safeguard the original text from any changes. Surely the spirit and intent of Urantia Foundation's *Declaration of Trust* forbids an

<p>ARTICLE III DUTIES OF TRUSTEES</p> <p>3.1. PRESERVATION OF TEXT OF THE URANTIA BOOK: It shall be the primary duty of the Trustees to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of THE URANTIA BOOK, and the Trustees shall use and employ such means, methods, and facilities and apply and expend as much of the Trust Estate as in the judgment of the Trustees shall be necessary, proper, or appropriate, for the preserving and the safekeeping of copies of the original text of THE URANTIA BOOK, duly authenticated by the Trustees, from loss, damage, or destruction and from alteration, modification, revision, or change in any manner or in any particular.</p>
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alteration of any kind to the original text. *"It shall be the primary duty of the Trustees to perpetually preserve inviolate the text of THE URANTIA BOOK, and the Trustees shall use and employ such means, methods, and facilities and apply and expend as much of the Trust Estate as in the judgment of the Trustees shall be necessary, proper, or appropriate, for the preserving and the safekeeping of copies of the original text of THE URANTIA BOOK, duly authenticated by the Trustees, from loss, damage, or destruction and from alteration, modification, revision, or change in*

any manner or in any particular." [Page 5, *Declaration of Trust*].

Some of us have noted that there is no reference to permit unilateral changes that would be allowed by "former contact commissioners." We also believe the intent of the clause regarding the preservation of the text of *The Urantia Book* was to be extended to Urantia Books that are *printed and distributed* by Urantia Foundation as well as those three copies of the inviolate text that are presumably being preserved somewhere. Without the original plates, these three copies are the last vestige of the original Trust Estate.

Why No Footnotes or Endnotes?

In addition, it remains a mystery that Urantia Foundation never alerted readers to the many editorial changes by means of footnotes or endnotes. Citations are standard

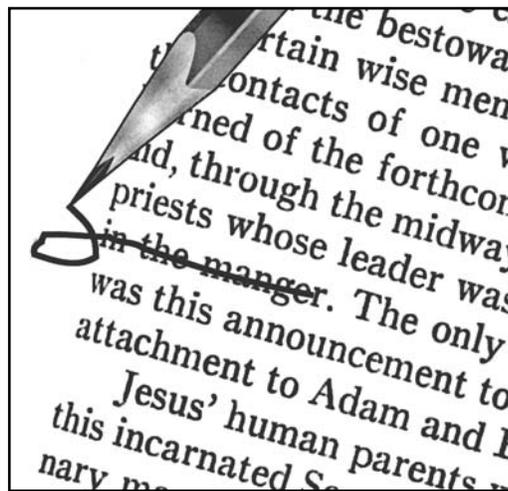
academic practice when making changes to the creative work of another author. In the case of an Epochal Revelation authored by celestial beings, common sense dictates that citations should be mandatory. This issue has been dismissed by some Urantians as making a “fetish” out of the original text of the Urantia Papers. But it was the creators of the *Declaration of Trust* (presumably with at least the tacit approval of the midwayers) who seemed to believe the preservation of the original text without human intrusion was of supreme importance. They must have had compelling reasons for this.

The Urantia Book entered the public domain when Urantia Foundation lost the copyright in 2003. Now anyone with enough funds can print their own version of the book. This has already happened, and in one case much (but not all) of the original text has been selectively restored in a unique two-column format with different pagination than the original book. This was done in good faith, but the door is now open for others to alter the text in any manner they choose. And this is why a touchstone of the original 1955 text is so important to some of us. It may be that some day there will be many “versions” of *The Urantia Book*. Thus it becomes all the more urgent that we can verify their content by referring to the first printing. Perhaps the new cyber-version of the plates of the first printing of *The Urantia Book* is even better than the material plates. The cyber-version is virtually indestructible, and is now immediately available to the entire world.

A Simple Test to See if You Need an Exact Replica of a First Printing of The Urantia Book

Should you be concerned about your Urantia Foundation printing of *The Urantia Book*? Go to page 1317, paragraph two. On line five the original 1955 text reads: “*These men of God visited the newborn child in the manger.*” Your Urantia Foundation book likely reads: “*These men of God visited the newborn child.*” (“*in the manger*” has been deleted unless you happen to have a 1955 printing.)

If this change does not perplex you, perhaps none of the other changes will either. However, if you wish to examine more of these editorial changes, an Appendix in *A History of the Urantia Papers** lists 133 changes to the 1955 text, with an exhaustive analysis by Urantian scholar Merritt Horn.



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****www.urantiapapershistory.com***