

# Futurity

Nearing the end of a well-organized and successful conference, it is customary to congratulate the planners and participants on the heightened understanding and intensified inspiration they clearly have attained. Others may congratulate you, but I shall not.

Nearing the end of the tumultuous and traumatic 20th century, it is customary to claim that we have found the right pathways and need only apply our energies to plans and programs already devised, in order to stride forward vigorously and successfully in the new millennium. Others may claim that, but I shall not.

Immersed in a mechanistic, materialistic, and skeptical era, it is customary to assert that since the spiritual insights we seek to absorb are eventually destined to emerge triumphant, all we need do now is voice them from a spiritual perspective and await the arrival of anxious humanity, attracted en masse by our spiritual beacon. Yes, others may assert that, but I shall not conspire to delude you by pretending to agree.

The revelation we are studying is not purely spiritual; it is spiritual, mindal, and material. The revelators did not solely exude an updated vision of goodness. To the contrary, they portrayed our planet and all mankind as benefiting from God's loving ministry devoted to a balanced blend of truth, beauty, and goodness. Yes, these are the plans of God the Father. But they are also the plans of God the Mother, the Supreme Being, the sum and synthesis of emerging finite perfection which it is our privilege to join in fostering.

The fifth epochal revelation does not stand in splendid isolation, an independent and insular exhibit in the saga of mankind. Even the word *fifth*, taken by itself, suffices to show that. No, a very high proportion of humanity's progressive future involves cleaning up after the insurrections and blunders of the past. *In spite of the Caligastia betrayal and the Adamic default, we, the citizens of Urantia, must still turn in our homework.*

On page 596 of *The Urantia Book*, a Mighty Messenger describes circumstances on a normal planet when a Paradise bestowal Son arrives:

The bestowal Son arrives on a world of high educational culture and encounters a race spiritually trained and prepared to assimilate advanced teachings and to appreciate the bestowal mission. This is an age characterized by the world-wide pursuit of moral culture and spiritual truth. The mortal passion of this dispensation is the penetration of cosmic reality and communion with spiritual reality. The revelations of truth are extended to

include the superuniverse. Entirely new systems of education and government grow up to supplant the crude regimes of former times. The joy of living takes on new color, and the reactions of life are exalted to heavenly heights of tone and timbre.

This certainly does not describe our world's condition when Jesus arrived, nor at any time since. On the next page, under the heading "Urantia's Postbestowal Age," the Mighty Messenger warns: "Urantia is not proceeding in the normal order. Your world is out of step in the planetary procession." He stipulates, "Jesus has shown the way to the immediate attainment of spiritual brotherhood," but then goes on to say, "the realization of social brotherhood on your world depends much on the following personal transformations and planetary adjustments." This leads the Mighty Messenger to make a series of sage suggestions under five headings: (1) social fraternity; (2) intellectual cross-fertilization; (3) ethical awakening; (4) political wisdom; and (5) spiritual insight.

I invite you to consider the Mighty Messenger's proposals, reflecting on their meanings and implications. But today I shall confine myself to a very broad comment: Of the five general endeavors which he considers essential for our planet's growth and advancement, *only one is spiritual*. We might possibly describe another, "ethical awakening," as partly spiritual, but there can be no doubt that *the remaining three are entirely social or intellectual*. Can we therefore conclude we are free just to sit in a corner, read *The Urantia Book*, and marvel at its spiritual inspiration — or must we do something more than that?

On pages 906 through 911 of *The Urantia Book*, an Archangel of Nebadon depicts 15 factors that are key to the development of civilization on Urantia. Shortly thereafter he states, "only by adherence to these essentials can man hope to maintain his present-day civilizations while providing for their continued development and certain survival" (page 912). *None of these 15 factors is overtly spiritual, although some have spiritual overtones*. Can we therefore conclude we are free just to sit in a corner, read *The Urantia Book*, and marvel at its spiritual inspiration — or do our obligations to God the Father, interlaced and linked with our obligations to God the Mother, require us to do far more than that?

In the paper "Seraphic Planetary Government," the Chief of Seraphim stationed on Urantia describes "twelve groups of special angels functioning as the immediate superhuman directors of planetary progress and stability" (page 1254). One of these twelve groups of master seraphim is explicitly spiritual ("*The religious guardians*"), and another is devoted to the ministry of all other superhuman life on the planet. *The remaining ten groups of master seraphim seek to uplift social, intellectual, political, and economic aspects of life on Urantia*. Can we therefore conclude we are free just to sit in a corner, read *The Urantia Book*, and marvel at its spiritual

inspiration — or do we have an affirmative obligation to cooperate with the seraphic planetary government, lend assistance to its plans for Urantia's growth and advancement, and in doing so mobilize our total resources of imagination, understanding, and energy?

As participants in the growth of the Supreme, we are not participating in finite growth of a solely *spiritual* character. The Supreme is also growing on *mindal* and *material* levels, and we are active partners in that growth as well. If we reflect on a Mighty Messenger's statement that "God the Supreme *is* truth, beauty, and goodness" (page 1279), it is reasonable to conclude that at least two of the three aspects — truth and beauty — have mindal and material as well as spiritual dimensions.

We must understand that spiritual life is *not* apart from the world, distinct from it, or in opposition to it. The planet we live on and all its inhabitants are pervaded by the Father's plan, the Son's mercy, and the Spirit's ministry. Our spiritual superiors envision the growth and advance of the individual, *but they also envision the growth and advance of all human society*.

If we speak of ourselves as individuals rather than as a socialized group of believers, it is clear that the growth and advance of human society is also *our work*, not just the work of our spiritual superiors. On page 555 of *The Urantia Book*, an Archangel of Nebadon states: "Nothing can take precedence over the work of your status sphere — this world or the next. Very important is the work of preparation for the next higher sphere, but nothing equals the importance of the work of the world in which you are actually living."

To avoid any possible misunderstanding, please allow me to stress what I am *not* advocating. I do not wish to suggest — and, to the contrary, would strenuously oppose — any active involvement of *organized groups* of *Urantia Book* readers in social, economic, or political projects. On page 1089 of *The Urantia Book*, a Melchizedek of Nebadon makes this point luminously clear:

Religionists, as a group, must never concern themselves with anything but *religion*, albeit any one such religionist, as an individual citizen, may become the outstanding leader of some social, economic, or political reconstruction movement.

It is the business of religion to create, sustain, and inspire such a cosmic loyalty in the individual citizen as will direct him to the achievement of success in the advancement of all these difficult but desirable social services.

The social and cultural upheavals currently occurring on our planet are inevitable and necessary. They are destined to endure for an extended period. We, our children, and

grandchildren — and, in practice, *their* children and grandchildren — must do our best to participate constructively. In the paper entitled “The Social Problems of Religion,” a Melchizedek of Nebadon warns us:

Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization; certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny. [Page 1086]

Throughout the 20th century, the secular bias of U.S. and European culture has propelled mechanistic, materialistic, and Machiavellian factors to the forefront of this worldwide process of renewal and reform. Secular idealism has sought to beautify the underlying strife from a philosophic perspective, or perhaps to camouflage its more repulsive features by resorting to deliberate self-deception. In any case, the net result has been a thin overlay of humanistic slogans, such as “self-determination of peoples,” “world peace through world law,” “the right to receive and impart information and ideas through any media, regardless of frontiers,” “women’s liberation,” “equality of opportunity,” “sustainable development,” and other sound bites of limited real impact in spite of their appealing words. In a crisis, any and all of these idealistic overlays can be expected to evanesce or vanish, so that opportunistic and self-serving motives suddenly loom evident and obvious.

Mankind cannot fulfill its destiny by denying the reality of God, for the destinies of each human being — and of humanity as a whole — follow pathways of growth and progression established by God the Father and God the Mother. On page 2082 of *The Urantia Book*, the Midwayer Commission declares: “Secular social and political optimism is an illusion. Without God, neither freedom and liberty, nor property and wealth will lead to peace.”

But if we, as individuals, unwisely continue to pursue spiritual life from a separatist perspective, if we continue to treat spiritual impulses as a closed, isolated, and self-righteous sphere that distinguishes itself from society and stands at least in partial opposition to it, that attitude of ours would tend to reinforce rather than overcome the divisive and pervasive outlook “secular” vs. “sacred.” In terms of teachings put forward by the authors of the fifth epochal revelation, our defects in this regard could be described as a failure to combine and integrate our visions of God transcendent and God immanent. Another way of explaining our shortcomings would be to say that we had failed to give due attention and cooperation to the plans and programs of the Supreme Being, God the Mother.

Continued indulgence in a separatist approach to spiritual life would also be an evasion of our duty to help heal the breach between science and religion, or at least seek to end the antagonism that has dominated most of the last 100 years. In the widest and most sweeping sense, we and those who come after us must eventually restore the unity of civilization from a spiritual perspective — awareness of God’s love of the individual *and* his simultaneous efforts to foster the collective advance of all mankind.

Now it will not surprise you if I say I have sensed a certain restiveness among those who hear my voice. Some of you, at least, have been asking yourselves, “What is this to me?” or “Why is he rambling on about all these vague and grandiose ideals?”

Some speakers might reply that these are good questions, these are reasonable concerns, but I shall not. Do you really expect me to tell you, individually, what you should do with these insights? In all good conscience, can any of you advocate that I revert to the principle of authority, dogma, and delimited duties that has dominated and perverted traditional religion, at least in the Western world?

I cannot, I will not indulge you in that way. You, each of you, must delve deeply into your imagination and decide for yourselves what best you can do for the cause of growth and advancement of civilization and society on our planet Urantia. You must build on your education, your experience, your character, your judgment. You must then seek to cooperate with others who have similar goals and visions — whether or not they are readers of *The Urantia Book*, whether or not they are proceeding from a spiritual perspective.

During Jesus’ visit to the northern Italian lakes, he pointed out to Ganid “the impossibility of teaching a man about God if the man does not desire to know God” (Midwayer Commission, page 1466):

“Ganid, the man was not hungry for truth. He was not dissatisfied with himself. He was not ready to ask for help, and the eyes of his mind were not open to receive light for the soul. That man was not ripe for the harvest of salvation; he must be allowed more time for the trials and difficulties of life to prepare him for the reception of wisdom and higher learning. Or, if we could have him live with us, we might by our lives show him the Father in heaven, and thus would he become so attracted by our lives as sons of God that he would be constrained to inquire about our Father. You cannot reveal God to those who do not seek for him; you cannot lead unwilling souls into the joys of salvation. Man must become hungry for truth as a result of the experiences of living, or he must desire to know God as the result of contact with the lives of those who are acquainted with the divine Father before another human being can act as the means of leading such a fellow mortal to the Father in heaven. If we know God, our real business on earth is so to live

as to permit the Father to reveal himself in our lives, and thus will all God-seeking persons see the Father and ask for our help in finding out more about the God who in this manner finds expression in our lives.” [Midwayer Commission, page 1466]

As we cooperate with others, perhaps our lives of service will indeed show them “the Father in heaven,” so that some of them, at least, will seek our help in discovering the God who expresses himself in the way we live. Yes, that will be God the Father, but we now know it must also be God the Mother, the Supreme Being, the sum and synthesis of emerging finite perfection which it is our privilege to join in fostering.

In the final analysis, we are *not* free just to sit in a corner, read *The Urantia Book*, and marvel at its spiritual inspiration. No, we must do far more than that. We have obligations to each other, to society, to our planet’s growth and advancement. Caligastia rebelled; Adam and Eve defaulted; but we, and those who come after us, must still turn in our homework. After age upon age, Urantia must return to the planetary pathways of normal progression. For such is the Father’s plan, such is the Father’s will. And as Jesus emphatically and unequivocally decided during his forty days in the hills of Perea,\* let the Father’s will be done.

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[As delivered on July 12, 1998 at the Summer Study Seminar, Washington, D.C.]

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\* For a full account, see the Midwayers’ narrative on pages 1512-1523 of *The Urantia Book*.