

Springtime – A Study of the Future

Since readers of The URANTIA Book are surely interested in the subject of prophesy, it may be opportune and helpful to study more deeply what our book says about the relatively near future.

The most significant things Jesus said about it are to be found in section 2 of Paper 176, wherein he said: "The things which you now look down upon are coming to an end, but this will be a new beginning out of which the gospel of the kingdom will go to all the world and this salvation will spread to all peoples. And when the kingdom shall have come to its full fruition, be assured that the Father in heaven will not fail to visit you with an enlarged revelation of truth..." (1914:5)

This "enlarged revelation of truth" has already appeared: The URANTIA Book. The Master makes it clear that he indeed means our book, because he continues: "...even as he has already bestowed upon this world him who became the prince of darkness [Caligastia, first epochal revelation], and then Adam [second epochal revelation], who was followed by Melchizedek [third revelation of epochal significance], and in these days, the Son of Man." [fourth epochal revelation]. (1914:5)

On page 1007:4 it is stated: "There have been many events of religious revelation but only five of epochal significance." The first four are the same as mentioned above by Jesus. The fifth is mentioned as The URANTIA Papers, the Melchizedek author's name for our book. It is evident that Jesus already 2000 years ago foretold the coming of our book, a book of epochal significance and even more, because it heralds a new dispensation.

From this fulfillment of his promise we could deduce also that the kingdom indeed has "...come to its full fruition..." (1914:5), as Jesus declared this to be a condition for the appearing of the enlarged revelation of truth. Now since this revelation did appear, this proves that the kingdom indeed has come to its full fruition. But what did Jesus mean by these words? Has all the world become Jesusonian or even Christian? Surely not; the meaning must be different.

Jesus could, for evolutionary reasons, not reveal as much truth as the fifth epochal revelation contains. Revelation is progressive. Therefore, to me the meaning of "coming to its full fruition" is that about all that reasonably could be expected to be attained by the fourth epochal revelation, given time and circumstances, has been attained.

Jesus taught the Fatherhood of God, the relationship between the individual and his personal Father. Our book expands this revelation to the revelation of the Universal Father, the Father of the whole planet and all planets. Jesus purposely limited his revelation to the spiritual domain, mainly the personal, spiritual domain. Our book includes also the material and physical domains, which are not merely personal. The universe, the planet, the population, the group, and the community are extensively dealt with also. But fully in accordance with the thoroughness of the universe, the book rehearses at length the earlier revelations, particularly in Part IV. Returning to page 1914, we find that immediately after the words "an enlarged revelation of truth," Jesus also promised, in the same sentence, "...an enhanced demonstration of righteousness..." (1914:5)

During several years I have overlooked these words, or at least they did not catch my attention. Subconsciously I considered them as a kind of embellishment of "the enlarged revelation of truth" part. But the authors, and certainly Jesus, are not given to embellishment and superfluous terminology.

So let us try to find the meaning of these words. Their meaning must be closely connected with "the enlarged revelation;" since they immediately follow in the same sentence. In our discussion of the fifth epochal revelation so far, we find that, besides the domain of personal religious experience, on which the fourth revelation was focused, it also includes the community aspects. And in the social community righteousness is a fundamental value. True, it is also basic in the individual experience, but personally we can, and should, discover righteousness, the will of God, through communion with the indwelling great teacher, the Adjuster. The community, however, has in general not attained to that indispensable level. So the Father and his Son, our Planetary Prince, will send us, compelled by love, a demonstration of righteousness. On the following page, Jesus explains that this demonstration implies a demonstrator. (1915:2) This apparently does not refer to his personal return to earth.

I Will Sometime Return.

After having repeated his promise that "I will sometime return" he explains that this return "will be with power and in the spirit;" only visible to "the eye of the spirit;" not to "the eye of the flesh." Therefore, this return can hardly be identical with "another dispensational bestowal," mentioned in this same paragraph (1915:3). Moreover, Jesus adds that "...the times of the reappearing of the Son of Man are known

only in the councils of Paradise; not even the angels of heaven know when this will occur." (1915:2) And the midwayers surmise: "But if every eye is to behold him, and if only spiritual eyes are to discern his presence, then must his advent be long deferred." (1919:3)

Inasmuch as there is no official URANTIA Brotherhood or Foundation interpretation of the teachings of The URANTIA Book, the views expressed herein are based wholly upon each author's understanding and personal religious experience.

Continuing our study and meditation of Jesus' words, we read: "However, you should understand that, when this gospel of the kingdom shall have been proclaimed to all the world for the salvation of all peoples..." (1915:2) This is a repetition of the conditions for the appearance of "the enlarged revelation of truth" on 1914:5. And we have already seen that because of the actual appearance of the enlarged revelation of truth, this condition must have been fulfilled. And because in this paragraph Jesus deals with "another dispensational bestowal," this condition has been fulfilled, too, with regard to this bestowal.

But Jesus adds another condition: ". . . and when the fullness of the age has come to pass..." (1915:2). It has been written more than once that the book has been given long before its time or a hundred years before its time. Its time is the new epoch, or dispensation. The new dispensation can only come "when the fullness of the age [the present dispensation] has come to pass." This has not yet occurred, and so we live in an interim period between the appearance of the book and the dispensation that begins with a dispensational bestowal. It is this interim Jesus refers to when he adds this new condition. How carefully Jesus chose his words on this memorable Tuesday evening! And of course it is another proof of Jesus' statement, "the Father and the Son know all things."

What could be the purpose of such an interim period? A bestowal is far from being just an accident in the evolution of a planet; it is most carefully planned in the universe. And this planning includes a certain activity from the side of the receivers of such a bestowal. This is illustrated in the cases of Adam and Jesus. In the latter case there had been prophetic predictions to the extent that all Jewry was expecting a new Messiah. And John the Baptist had been destined to become the forerunner of the new kingdom. The world must be prepared for the new dispensational bestowal. Therefore our book, as a phase of the new dispensation, has been given before its time to be followed later by the complemental phase of the "demonstrator of righteousness." And we, as

the receivers of the prebestowal book, have been given the mandate "to form thousands of study groups" to the end there may be teachers and leaders for the time "when the fullness of the age has come to pass."

The URANTIA Papers, though of epochal significance, and belonging to the new epoch, do not constitute in themselves the beginning of a new dispensation. But the dispensational bestowal, the demonstrator of righteousness, does constitute the new dispensation. Apparently The URANTIA Book has been given in advance and this gives a new meaning and dimension to the book for us who live in this interim time. We should not study it for personal salvation only, how indispensable this may be. After having secured personal salvation, the alert and understanding reader gives attention to the responsibility and task this enlarged revelation of truth assigns to him in connection with the coming bestowal.

And then Jesus adds something that many times has caused me much trouble. ". . . the Father will send you another dispensational bestowal, or else the Son of Man will return to adjudge the age." (1915:2) In itself it is not remarkable that the Son of Man should return for a judicial action. We know that: "When a Paradise Son visits an evolutionary world and becomes like one of its people, his presence terminates a dispensation and constitutes a judgment of the realm" (226:4). Jesus has terminated the Adamic dispensation and opened a new one, the dispensation of the Spirit of Truth. We have not had a Magisterial Son to do this, and therefore, it seems logical that our Paradise Son should return to adjudge the age. Such a judicial mission is not a bestowal and the Son will not be visible on such a mission.

But my real trouble lies in the little word else. Taken literally, and in itself, this could mean there even will not be another bestowal! Though I am inclined to reason that, because of the fulfillment of the condition of "the full fruition;" and the actual appearance of "the enlarged revelation of truth;" the second part of Jesus' promise will be fulfilled also; nevertheless, this last part of the sentence could contain a certain warning to us. Could it be that we, who have been privileged and blessed with the knowledge of these promises of the Master, and having a special responsibility in the preparation for this dispensational bestowal, may fail in our tasks? Does it matter if we should or should not do our duty in the execution of Michael's plans? We also belong to the group that is designated as "stewards of truth," and we also might be qualified as "barren stewards." Why is there no increase, no growing in crease in the number of study groups? Why a setback in the distribution of books? "In accordance with the truth committed to your

hands, [The URANTIA Papers], will the Master of truth require a reckoning. " (1918:1) After having dealt with "...the travail of Jerusalem... (1915:3) and the return of the Son of Man of which "no one in heaven or on earth may presume to speak," he continues with the subject in which we actually are interested now, in our time. "But you should be wise regarding the ripening of an age; you should be alert to discern the signs of the times. You know when the fig tree shows its tender branches and puts forth its leaves that summer is near. Likewise, when the world has passed through the long winter of material-mindedness and you discern the coming of the spiritual springtime of a new dispensation, should you know that the summertime of a new visitation draws near. " (1915:3) We do discern the signs of the times: the "gospel of the kingdom" has gone to all the world and all peoples, the "full fruition" has been achieved, and last but not least "the enlarged revelation of truth" has appeared. The midwayers state: 'At the time of this writing [the year 1935] the worst of the materialistic age is over...' (2076:9) Therefore the spiritual springtime is now.

Given Before Its Time.

If we return for a moment to the statement that the book has been given a hundred years before its time, it is remarkable to find this period also mentioned in our book: "Here, Master, is the truth you committed to us a hundred or a thousand years ago. (1918:1) (The number "thousand" also is not accidental, as may be explained later.) It is not uncommon for our book to reveal something in such an inconspicuous way. The book has been given to be studied, not for superficial reading. A superficial reader does not notice such things, but an alert student will try to connect them with other items and so gain new, often surprising, insights or indications that his own line of thinking is correct.

Another corroborative fact is, as speculated by many among us, that the book for the first one hundred years has been given in the custody of "the angels of the churches," while after that period the progress angels take over. The angels of the churches "...endeavor to maintain the ideals of that which has survived for the sake of the safe transit of moral values from one epoch to another," while the progress angels "...are entrusted with the task of initiating the evolutionary progress of the successive social ages." (1255:7,6)

A New Bestowal.

There are more places in the book that point to a new bestowal. It is said of the Trinity Teacher Sons that they ". . . even now visit your world for the purpose of

formulating plans concerning their projected sojourn on your sphere. They will be due to appear on Urantia after its inhabitants have gained comparative deliverance from the shackles of animalism and from the fetters of materialism." (231:5) Remember the statement of the midwayers: "the worst of the materialistic age is over." (2076:9)

The Teacher Sons come to initiate a spiritual age, "a millennium of cosmic enlightenment." Future dispensations are not going to last tens of thousands of years; they become much shorter as evolution advances. In this light should be seen the "thousand years;" mentioned above.

Teacher Sons are normally accompanied by a Magisterial Son for the necessary judicial action. Because we have not had a Magisterial Son, the Son of Man could (invisibly to the living mortals on earth) reappear to judge the "Stewards of truth." (1918:1)

It is worthwhile to study sections 7-9 of paper 20 (230-232) for a better understanding of the purposes of the Trinity Teacher Sons. (pps.230-232) "They make real the spiritual counterparts of material knowledge and temporal wisdom." (232:1) We now have "...a society which staggers under the guilt of tolerating science without idealism, politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without restraint, knowledge without character, power without conscience, and industry without morality." (2086:6) The Teacher Sons will make real the spiritual counterparts of these otherwise empty and senseless attainments. Is not this wholly in agreement with a bestowal demonstration of righteousness?

Trinity Teacher Sons remain invisible, but are accompanied by the Brilliant Evening Stars, who serve ". . . as liaisons between the mortals of the realm and the invisible corps of Teacher Sons." (408:2) The Brilliant Evening Stars are also invisible to mortals, but they "...possess a spirit force which can be manifested independently of their personal presence." (407:5) "The entire world [of Jerusem] has been rendered spiritually fragrant [by the Brilliant Evening Stars] since so many of their activities were transferred here from Salvington." (526:1) [Such an unusual transference to the capital of our system is also meaningful. I So Teacher Sons together with Brilliant Evening Stars can have a very powerful influence on a planet, even when invisible. When this is complemented with a visible demonstrator and his liaisons, tremendous changes in the spiritual atmosphere of the planet may be expected. In the section concerning the archangels is the well known paragraph about their divisional headquarters on Urantia: "Do you grasp the significance of the fact that your lowly and confused planet has become a divisional headquarters for the universe [not planetary, neither system nor constellation, but universe!] administration and direction of certain archangel activities having to do with the Paradise ascension scheme? This undoubtedly presages the future concentration of other ascendant activities on the bestowal world of Michael and lends a tremendous

and solemn import to the Master's personal promise, 'I will come again.'" (409:2)
Another example of universe speculation!

In Michael's planning, Urantia evidently is to become an important center. This "lowly and confused planet" has rejected its rightful Sovereign. And this is the divine retribution: Urantia will become a jewel in the crown of Michael, our Master, through a concentrated effort of his and the Father's ministers. Is this of no concern to us now? No, indeed, if we are interested merely in personal salvation and organization, or if we do not become universe-minded. His plans are partially revealed already now. This means a challenge to our study and understanding and a call for cooperation. We belong to Urantia, now and even after death. But let us not repeat the foolishness of mere human activity without spiritual enlightenment, and let us not be proud, we are only servants! Let us be sure to really co-operate with the powers that be. And the first step in this is the growing communion with the Father within. This is the first phase of the kingdom. (1862:11) And then we should enliven phase 2, (*1863: 1), through this realization of phase 1 (plenty of work here!), and that is what phase 3, the supermortal brotherhood is waiting for.

Michael is already engaged in carrying out his plans, as we have seen. Clear evidence is also the fact of the assignment of Machiventa Melchizedek as Vicegerent Planetary Prince of Urantia. For an unnamed reason he has not yet assumed his office. But because we are free to speculate, I think this is because Urantia is not yet fully ready for it. Caligastia is hardly recognized in his sinister and nefarious actions, often not even among Urantians. But at least we could begin to try to realize what the acceptance of Melchizedek would imply, in this way preparing ourselves. Always the relatively few are the decisive factor, the vanguard.

Our fallen Lanonandek Son will be replaced by a Melchizedek, one of the order of the "eldest Sons of the local universe;" even more than a Constellation Father. "They are the teachers who so often win whole worlds of advanced life to the final and full recognition of the Creator Son and his Paradise Father." (386:6) They are "understanding friends, sympathetic teachers, and wise counselors" (385:5) and they are powerful! And then in Paper 170, The Kingdom of Heaven, it is predicted: "Sooner or later another and greater John the Baptist [not plural] is due to arise proclaiming "the kingdom of God is at hand"- meaning a return to the high spiritual concept of Jesus.. ." (1866:2) John the Baptist was the forerunner and herald of Jesus' bestowal. So this new and greater John the Baptist probably will be the forerunner of a new bestowal, as has seemingly been confirmed by the revelators. Such a great preacher may, through the present worldwide communication media, bring about a considerable change in the religious thinking of this world: ". . . such a restatement as will undo the work of Jesus' early followers who went about to create a socio-philosophical system of belief regarding the fact of Michael's sojourn on earth." (1866:2) This is a mighty prediction! To undo the work of Jesus' early followers! Don't read it superficially, just realize what this may mean in particular for the

orthodox churches. And what does this mean for us, now? If such a spiritual revolution does take place, are we ready to assist in giving positive guidance to the confused? This event is not ages away!

Study Without Prejudice.

We have discussed so far some of the references our book makes to the coming events; understanding students may find more. Let us study without prejudice. We are all somewhat prejudiced because we are not used to and prepared for sudden events. "When physical conditions are ripe, sudden mental evolutions may take place; when mind status is propitious, sudden spiritual transformations may occur. . . ." (740:3) For us, personally, the greatest transformation remains the growing and enlightening communion with the Father within, and also when we direct our thinking to these subjects. This will prevent inopportune human action. Remember, our greatest action is seeking, discovering, the Father's will, through value-realization. (see p.2087:2)

"Urantia is now quivering on the very brink of one of its most amazing and enthralling epochs of social readjustment, moral quickening, and spiritual enlightenment." (2082:8)

We have already referred to the five phases of the kingdom, mentioned on p. 1862-1863. Phase 4 is "The prospect of the more perfect fulfillment of the will of God, the advance toward the dawn of a new social order in connection with improved spiritual living -the next age of man." (1863:3) It should be noted that this phase follows Phase 3: " The supermortal brotherhood of invisible spiritual beings which prevails on earth and in heaven, the superhuman kingdom of God." (1863:2) The five phases show causal order. And the midwayers continue: "Although Jesus referred one phase of the kingdom to the future, [Phase 5] and did, on numerous occasions, intimate that such an event might appear as a part of a world crisis..." (1863:13) I think we should give some attention to our attitude in such a crisis.

Jesus' attitude towards temporal upheavals or terrestrial cataclysms is depicted in this statement: "What does it matter to you who believe this gospel of the kingdom if nations overturn, the age ends, or all things visible crash, since you know that your life is the gift of the Son, and that it is eternally secure in the Father?" (1916:2)

Jesus was very consistent. Eternal things are more real than temporal things. There is no real need to fear, though he understands our human reactions. His statement is psychologically and spiritually practical. It reminds me of wartime, when the bomber fleets from England used to roar above us on their way to Germany. It proved practical then to reckon with the worst that could happen, and then say: So what! It gave calm. Thus Jesus also brings up the worst that could happen: "... all things visible crash..." I believe no crisis will reach to that extent, because there are

so many passages in our book that make such an event highly improbable. What could a "demonstrator of righteousness" do when there are no more mortals to teach? But psychologically and spiritually it is a sound thing to ponder. It is a challenge to our faith. Let us trust in our all-wise and merciful Father and his ministers. Remember what has been said about providence. Providence works for the whole, for the group. If we individually are important for the spiritual welfare of other people, providence works. The best protection we can have is in being spiritually active and alert. And let it always be in our hearts: "Kingdom builders ... are not to be disturbed by temporal upheavals or ... terrestrial cataclysms." (1916:2)

There is so much we can do now for the fourth phase of the kingdom. Our invisible brothers of the kingdom are waiting for us. Let us put our spiritual imagination into action, in sonship with God. Peace-movements on the whole are active in the negative: anti-nuclear warfare, and so on. Our book shows us, in the Urmia lectures, for instance, how we could be positively active in promoting world government. Such a thing must always first become real in the minds of the few, and the more real it becomes for them, the more it will contaminate other people, because it is sound and positive. In this way and in many others we could prepare ourselves for "the next age." And thus we co-operate with our superiors. If we sincerely try to realize what changes will occur, this will bring ample opportunity for constructive thinking. What is needed is spiritual insight and universe-consciousness, (which only comes after God-consciousness). But we could begin with universe-mindedness, willingness to overcome prejudice from inertia and lack of imagination. And lack of belief in what has already been revealed of the plans of our Master. God and men need each other. Be of good cheer, it is springtime already!

Henry Begemann.