

THE COMING SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

PART I

PRESENT CONDITIONS

Spiritual Development at a Standstill

Our world is now entering the twenty-first century and the third millennium after Christ. What will our future be like? How will we evolve in this new century and coming millennium? What does the future hold for the spiritual life on Urantia?

Questions about the future are not easy to answer. However, the Urantia Book does contain many intriguing clues and clear statements regarding our future. If we approach this question with courage, the sincere desire to know the truth, and prayerful dependence on spiritual guidance, we are well equipped to find trustworthy answers.

The future flows from the present, and a clear knowledge of present conditions gives us the proper basis and perspective to visualize the future.

When we ask what are the present conditions of Urantia, we find ourselves face to face with a number of unpleasant and disturbing facts. Spiritual living is not progressing well on earth; in fact the Urantia Book tells us on page 909 that “*modern civilization is at a standstill in spiritual development.*”

Why is this so? There are a number of reasons but the Urantia Book mentions at least five that are of overriding importance.

Problems of the Past

First, we lost our Planetary Prince to rebellion and instead of the progressive civilization, advanced culture, and *divine world government* that this mission normally brings, our world was left in confusion and spiritual darkness.

Second, we lost our Adam and Eve to default. This meant we not only lost the *divine role models of marriage and of family life*, but also the biological uplift that would have provided physical bodies that are more naturally spirit responsive.

Third, the Christian Church has failed in its mission to provide for the continuous spiritual transformation of individuals and society inherent in Jesus’ original gospel of the kingdom. Instead of expanding Jesus’ real religion the church substituted teaching about Jesus, and these doctrines now stand as very real obstacles to the immediate reception of his true gospel.

Transition Problems

Fourth, our twenty-first century world is in a state of great *transition*. Traditional morality and religion have been weakened by the advances of a scientific age. This has

left our world *without moral and spiritual anchorage* in a time of constant and accelerating change. Here is how a Melchizedek describes our situation:

*“Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization. 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.”* (1086; my emphasis)

Times of transition such as we are now experiencing are times of great danger and uncertainty. In such times the need for the moral guidance and the real religion of spiritual experience is especially acute. On page 1090 we find this amazingly accurate picture of our times and its needs:

*“During the psychologically unsettled times of the twentieth century, amid the economic upheavals, the moral crosscurrents, and the sociologic rip tides of the cyclonic transitions of a scientific era, thousands upon thousands of men and women have become humanely dislocated; they are **anxious, restless, fearful, uncertain, and unsettled; as never before in the world’s history they need the consolation and stabilization of sound religion.**”* (my emphasis)

Materialism and Secularism

The Fifth, and in many ways the most serious challenge to spiritual living on our world, concerns the prevailing modern philosophies of materialism and secularism.

The Urantia Book tells us that we are now living in an “age of scientific minds and materialistic tendencies.” (2075) But while the materialism of the twentieth and twenty-first century disorients civilization towards the material level and away from moral and spiritual realities, it is modern secularism that poses the greatest threat to future spiritual progress. On page 2081 the revelators state,

*“But even after materialism and mechanism have been more or less vanquished, the devastating influence of twentieth century secularism will still **blight the spiritual experience of millions of unsuspecting souls.**”* (my emphasis)

Later on this page the revelators issue this warning:

“Twentieth century secularism tends to affirm that man does not need God. But beware! This godless philosophy of human society will lead only to unrest, animosity, unhappiness, war, and world-wide disaster.”

Secularism denies God and even seeks to take his place in human society. But it is an illusion to think that society can progress without God and true morality. It simply will not work. Without God and genuine religion society has no real glue that can hold it

together. And we are now experiencing this fact as we witness *disintegration* on every level, from marriage and family life, to societies and economies, and even to nation-states. As the revelators say on 2082,

*“This secularistic human society, notwithstanding its unparalleled materialistic achievement, is slowly **disintegrating**.”* (my emphasis)

Our Reaction

How should we react to the Urantia Book’s warnings regarding “*the present crisis of civilization*”? (1087) What should be our attitude when we clearly see our world facing great problems, disintegration, and potential disaster? We must realize that in times of great crisis it is only our *personal faith connection* with God that will prove helpful. We must exercise genuine religious faith and take refuge in the heavenly kingdom. Jesus taught this to the apostles on Mt. Olivet as they faced the great crisis of their lives, and his words should guide us today. Here he said to them, “The downfall of nations, the crash of empires, the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, the end of an age, even the end of the world, what have these things to do with one who believes this gospel, who has hid his life in the surety of the eternal kingdom?” (1916)

On page 1108 the Urantia Book lists eleven *faith reactions* that appear to be specifically addressed to these problems we now face at the beginning of the new millennium. Since they speak directly to the problems of modern civilization we do well to remember them and seek to exercise the faith, courage, tranquillity, and confidence they inspire. Here the revelators tell us that genuine spiritual faith is revealed in that it:

- *Lives and triumphs irrespective of the crushing overload of the complex and partial civilizations of modern times.*
- *Contributes to the continued survival of altruism in spite of human selfishness, social antagonisms, industrial greeds, and political maladjustments.*
- *Continues to exhibit undaunted faith in the soul’s survival regardless of the deceptive teachings of false science and the persuasive delusions of unsound philosophy.*
- *Generates profound courage and confidence despite natural adversity and physical calamity.*
- *Exhibits inexplicable poise and sustaining tranquillity notwithstanding baffling diseases and even acute physical suffering.*
- *Maintains a divine trust in ultimate victory in spite of the cruelties of seemingly blind fate and the apparent utter indifference of natural forces to human welfare.*
- *Produces a sublime trust in the goodness of God even in the face of bitter disappointment and crushing defeat.*

- *Goes right on worshipping God in spite of anything and everything. Dares to declare, “Even though he slay me, yet will I serve him.”*

We cannot be certain as to what our future holds but we can be ready for any eventuality if we choose to put our trust in God, live by faith, and take refuge in the kingdom. This should be our first reaction to the problems resulting from past failures, the transition difficulties of modern times, and the materialism and secularism that threaten the spiritual progress of twenty-first century civilization.

PART II

THE FUTURE

The Coming Spiritual Renaissance

What of our future? Will it continue to be dominated by these non-spiritual forces that presently rule our world?

When we look to the Urantia revelation to answer this question we find *great good news*. The revelators forecast a *bright new age* in which our present non-spiritual trends will give way to a new era of spiritual living. One of their most powerful and compelling prophecies is found on page 2087. Here the midwayers tell us that,

“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.”

The Spiritual, Moral, and Social Arenas

Viewed against the background of present world conditions this is indeed a startling prediction. It specifies three areas—the spiritual, moral, and social arenas—in which the future will differ radically from the present.

Spiritually, our world will witness a shift from our present materialistic and secular ways to a time of great spiritual advancement. No longer will our world suffer from spiritual stagnation, but rather will it experience a great new *spiritual renaissance*. Finally the world will really begin to live the teachings of Jesus. Urantia is about to move to a higher phase of his kingdom in which “the more perfect fulfillment of the will of God” (1863) becomes a defining characteristic of the age.

Morally, the new age will bring a greater adherence to moral and ethical standards of conduct. Today’s world is characterized by a breakdown of morality, unbridled self-expression, lust for power, and self-gratification; but no so the world of the future. The new age will bring the ethical awakening and enhanced moral insight that is essential to truly living the golden rule.

Socially our world is in a state of great transition—of rapid and unceasing change. Such change is difficult and holds many dangers, but the final outcome will be a new and

transformed human society. The revelators prophesy that our next age will witness the “dawn of a *new social order* in connection with improved spiritual living.” (1863) This will be a time of greatly enhanced human relations and “*true social righteousness.*” (1862)

This society of the next age will not only involve improved moral and spiritual relations among individuals but will also extend to the economic and political structures governing our world. An economy based more on co-operation and service is destined to replace exclusively profit-motivated economics. And the political life of nations will be reorganized and subject to a representative world government. This will finally bring to earth the blessings of world peace and good will toward all men.

What Will Transform our World?

All these advancements involve complete departures from present world conditions. How shall they come about? What will bring such wondrous changes?

Here I must disappoint some by pointing out that the Urantia Revelation is not the answer, *except* and in so far as it contributes to a new revelation of *Jesus*. For it is **Jesus**, his teachings, his life, and his personal religion, that is the hope of our world and the force which will lead us into a new and better future.

The Urantia Book very clearly prophesies this. For example on 2097 the midwayer commission encourages us with this vision of the future,

*“Be not discouraged; human evolution is still in progress and the revelation of God to the world **in and through Jesus** shall not fail.”* (my emphasis)

And on 2082 they further assure us with this inspiring prophecy:

*“A new and fuller revelation of **the religion of Jesus** is destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism”* (my emphasis)

How Will This Transformation Come About?

How will this come about? The Christian Church has exalted Jesus for 2000 years. What is going to happen that will allow Jesus’ teachings to finally come to dominate Urantia?

The midwayers answer this question on page 1866. Here they predict a *restatement* of Jesus’ teachings, which will undo the work of his early followers who evolved a religion about Jesus, which came to replace the religion of Jesus. Thus the midwayers make clear that it is a new revelation of Jesus’ *actual teachings*, a revival of his *true gospel*, which will remake our world and lead us out of our present darkness into the great light of a better day.

When Will This Transformation Come?

When will this revival of Jesus’ actual teachings take place? Is it far in the future or is it near at hand?

The answer to this question may shock some, for the Urantia Book makes clear that the time for this new revelation of Jesus is not far in the future, it is **now**. Listen to what the revelators tell us:

“The hour is striking for a rediscovery of the true and original foundations of present day distorted and compromised Christianity—the real life and teachings of Jesus.” (2083; my emphasis)

“Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus’ life and illuminated with a new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation.” (2084; my emphasis)

How Should We React?

If we believe the teachings of the new revelation and accept the fact that our present dark, confused, and troubled world, is headed, through crises, into a glorious new and more spiritual age, how should we react?

If we look to the Urantia Book for help and guidance we find most inspiring answers. The new revelation clearly calls for **us** to help bring this spiritual renaissance to our world. On 2082 the midwayers issue this stirring call,

“Religion does need new leaders, spiritual men and women who will dare to depend solely on Jesus and his incomparable teachings.” (my emphasis)

And on 2084 the revelators repeat this call and promise thrilling adventure to those who are moved to action. Here they declare that,

“The call to the adventure of a building a new and transformed human society by means of the spiritual rebirth of Jesus’ brotherhood of the kingdom should thrill all who believe in him as men have not been stirred since the days they walked about the earth as his companions in the flesh.”

For those of us who choose to heed this calling the promise is great, for we are to become participants, even leaders, in the coming of the new spiritual renaissance. On 2082 the midwayers predict that,

“these new teachers of Jesus’ religion” will “quickly supply the leadership and inspiration requisite for the social, moral, economic, and political reorganization of the world.” (my emphasis)

Let us be uplifted and inspired by the needs of our time and the revelators’ call to action. Let us realize where we are, where we are going, and what must be done. We have a new revelation of truth in our hands and hopefully in our hearts. But we must do more than keep it safely locked up within ourselves. True religion acts! Let us decide that we will be part of the great new spiritual renaissance that is soon coming upon this world. Let us go forward and help bring it about!

(Preston Thomas, 1998)