

## THE GOOD OF THE WORLD AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE NATIONS: A STUDY OF MODERN UTOPIAN AND DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

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This article is beautifully written, carefully constructed, balanced in its proportions as well as in its judgments. Since the author is interested in nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels, there is no need to deal with More's *Utopia* beyond the brief mention it receives. Since, however, I believe that More's brilliant work takes into very careful and very subtle consideration the limitations of utopian literature presented in this paper, it might invite further consideration. More, it has been argued, writes as a Christian who recognizes the dangers (including heresy) of identifying the Kingdom of God with earthly kingdoms. Christ's Kingdom is not of this world. Heaven cannot, at least not yet, be realized upon earth. The time has not arrived for the descent of the New Jerusalem. To force the Hand of God, to demand of Him now the Kingdom He promised, is to force human nature into a restricted mold that will not permit it naturally and spiritually to develop unto such time as it is ready, like the wise virgins of Christ's parable (Christ in his midnight return becoming the bridegroom), to receive the Kingdom. For the Kingdom to come prematurely would be to greet it with lamps without oil. There is, therefore, a fundamental darkness pervading More's *Utopia*. It is a nowhere place where life is more mechanical than organic. More's *Utopia* is a study of the heretical imagination, the kind of imagination that would allow Henry VIII to have his cake and eat it too by setting himself up as spiritual head of the English Church because the Roman one wouldn't grant him a divorce. He wanted his kingdom on earth now, and he got it, in More's terms, by becoming a heretic. One must pay a price for that (it would cost More his head).

Christ's Kingdom was not of this world. He was not the Messiah of the Jews seated upon the Throne of David to rule all nations. That seat belongs to Bahá'u'lláh who comes when humanity has evolved to the point where it can receive Him, which is what Bahá'u'lláh calls "the time for the destruction of the world and its people." As if in obedience to Bahá'u'lláh, dystopias declare that time "hath arrived." They, as much as More's *Utopia*, affirm, prefigure, the coming of the Kingdom, one by showing what it might be like if it arrived prematurely, the other by showing what it is like if denied, what, that is, are the signs of its coming (the sun darkened, the moon giving no light, the stars falling, etc.). Dystopias find their model in the Síyáh-Chál, the sewer of an abandoned public bath, which God in this Day chose as the most appropriate place to reveal Himself, even as in an earlier time He chose a stable.

I therefore strongly agree with the conclusion about the Bahá'í world order expressed in this article as fulfilling what must be absent in the novels discussed.

In that absence, however, is Bahá'u'lláh's presence. My offered remarks are mainly intended as possible mental openings for some further and future consideration. There is much here that is worth further thought toward future publication.

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