

Introduction

What have men been saying?

Dr. Urey, from the University of Chicago, who worked on the atomic bomb, began an article several years ago in Collier's magazine by saying, "I am a frightened man, and I want to frighten you."

Dr. John R. Mott returned from a trip around the world and made the statement that this was "the most dangerous era the world has ever known." And he raised the question of where we are heading. Then he made this further statement, "When I think of human tragedy, as I saw it and felt it, of the Christian ideals sacrificed as they have been, the thought comes to me that God is preparing the way for some immense direct action."

Chancellor Robert M. Hutchins, of the University of Chicago, gave many people a shock several years ago when he made the statement that "devoting our educational efforts to infants between six and twenty-one seems futile." And he added, "The world may not last long enough." He contended that for this reason we should begin adult education.

Winston Churchill said, "Time may be short."

Mr. Luce, the owner of Life, Time, and Fortune magazines, addressed a group of missionaries who were the first to return to their fields after the war. Speaking in San Francisco, he made the statement that when he was a boy, the son of a Presbyterian missionary in China, he and his father often discussed the premillennial coming of Christ, and he thought that all missionaries who believed in that teaching were inclined to be fanatical. And then Mr. Luce said, "I wonder if there wasn't something to that position after all."

It is very interesting to note that The Christian Century carried an article by Wesner Fallaw which said, "A function of the Christian is to make preparation for world's end."

Dr. Charles Beard, the American historian, said, "All over the world the thinkers and searchers who scan the horizon of the future are attempting to assess the values of civilization and speculating about its destiny."

Dr. William Yogh, in the Road to Civilization, wrote: "The handwriting on the wall of five continents now tells us that the Day of Judgment is at hand."

Dr. Raymond B. Fosdick, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, said, "To many ears comes the sound of the trump of doom. Time is short."

H. G. Wells declared before he died, “This world is at the end of its tether. The end of everything we call life is close at hand.”

General Douglas MacArthur said, “We have had our last chance.”

Former president Dwight Eisenhower said, “Without a moral regeneration throughout the world there is no hope for us as we are going to disappear one day in the dust of an atomic explosion.”

Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, ex-president of Columbia University, said, “The end cannot be far distant.”

Type of Literary Genre

At the very end of the Bible there stands a great “mansion” known as the book of Revelation. Some Christians have not dared to approach this great and awesome “mansion,” they have stayed away from it. They have been overwhelmed by the intricate passageways and the strange and imposing pictures that hang on the walls. Fearing that they would lose their way and, being intimidated by the scenes portrayed in the pictures, they have avoided this majestic “mansion” of divine revelation. Other Christians have gone to the opposite extreme: they have exhibited a fascination, even a pre-occupation, with the gallery of exotic pictures, but they have not allowed this book of divine revelation to have a profound and practical impact on their lives.

Authorship and Canonicity

Date of Composition

Approaches to the Interpretation of the Revelation

Historist-panoramic view, fulfilled throughout history

Preterist-fulfilled shortly after written

Idealist-just moral lessons

Futuristic-mainly prophecy, yet to be fulfilled

Divisions of the book

I The Person of Jesus Christ—Christ in glory, chapter 1.

II. The Possession of Jesus Christ—the church in the world is His, chapters 2–3.

III. The Program of Jesus Christ—as seen in heaven, chapters 4–22.

Connection between Genesis and Revelation

In Genesis the earth was created; in Revelation the earth passes away.

In Genesis was Satan's first rebellion; in Revelation is Satan's last rebellion.

In Genesis the sun, moon, and stars were for earth's government; in Revelation these same heavenly bodies are for earth's judgment.

In Genesis the sun was to govern the day; in Revelation there is no need of the sun.

In Genesis darkness was called night; in Revelation there is "no night there" (see Rev. 21:25; 22:5).

In Genesis the waters were called seas; in Revelation there is no more sea.

In Genesis was the entrance of sin; in Revelation is the exodus of sin.

In Genesis the curse was pronounced; in Revelation the curse is removed.

In Genesis death entered; in Revelation there is no more death.

In Genesis was the beginning of sorrow and suffering; in Revelation there will be no more sorrow and no more tears.

In Genesis was the marriage of the first Adam; in Revelation is the marriage of the Last Adam.

In Genesis we saw man's city, Babylon, being built; in Revelation we see man's city, Babylon, destroyed and God's city, the New Jerusalem, brought into view.

In Genesis Satan's doom was pronounced; in Revelation Satan's doom is executed.

It is interesting that Genesis opens the Bible not only with a global view but also with a universal view—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). And the Bible closes with another global and universal book. The Revelation shows what God is going to do with His universe and with His creatures. There is no other book quite like this.