

**THE MILLENNIAL
HOPE: A PHASE OF
WAR-TIME THINKING**

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The millennial hope: a phase of war-time thinking by Shirley Jackson Case

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PREFACE

The primary purpose of this book is to answer a single question: Are the ills of society to be righted by an early and sudden destruction of the present world, or is permanent relief to be secured only by a gradual process of strenuous endeavor covering a long period of years?

The stirring events of recent times have given new point to this question. Vigorous propagandists have been urging belief in the speedy end of the world and the hoplessness of any remedial measures for effecting permanent improvement in present conditions. In the name of religion, it is maintained that human efforts to make the present world a safer and better place in which to live are wholly misguided. On the contrary, God is said to will that conditions shall grow constantly worse as the hour of impending doom approaches.

At the present time this pessimistic view of the world is especially pernicious. In principle

it strikes at the very heart of all democratic ideals. According to its fundamental teaching, God is regarded as an almighty potentate who has foreordained to failure all the efforts of men to establish improved forms of government. For one who holds consistently to this opinion it is nonsense to talk of human responsibility for the betterment of society. This type of teaching, which is being vigorously inculcated in many circles, readily plays into the hands of all enemies of social and political reform. By persuading men that the rapid deterioration and early destruction of the present world are determined upon by divine decree, the enemy of reform has a mighty instrument for strangling the citizen's sense of civic duty. This is equally true whether the call to service is merely local or whether it is national and international.

The following pages are designed to exhibit the fallacious and harmful character of present-day teaching regarding the imminent end of the world. The method of treatment is historical. Different beliefs of this general type current among the ancients are examined in order to discover the specific circumstances which called them into being and their utter futility as

shown by subsequent events. When viewed in this historical setting, the absurdity of attempting to solve modern problems in a similarly fanciful way is readily perceived.

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