

Man's Social Destiny in the Light of Science

By CHARLES A. ELLWOOD

Professor of Sociology in the University of Missouri.

IS the Kingdom of God on earth a possibility? Can we reasonably hope for a peaceful world ruled by freedom, justice and love in human relations? Or do the scientific facts about human nature and social development make such a goal improbable and unreasonable? The claim of Christianity to have any message for society and indeed the whole future of our civilization must depend upon the answer to these questions, which are here discussed
by an eminent sociologist.

THE COLE LECTURES FOR 1929
Delivered Before VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

MAN'S SOCIAL DESTINY
IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE

BY
CHARLES A. ELLWOOD

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DESTINY
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"CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE," ETC.

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THE COLE LECTURES

THE late Col. E. W. Cole, of Nashville, Tenn., donated to Vanderbilt University the sum of five thousand dollars, afterwards increased by Mrs. E. W. Cole to ten thousand, the design and conditions of which gift are stated as follows:

“The object of this fund is to establish a foundation for a perpetual lectureship in connection with the School of Religion of the university, to be restricted in its scope to a defense and advocacy of the Christian religion. The lectures shall be delivered at such intervals, from time to time, as shall be deemed best by the Board of Trust; and the particular theme and lecturer will be determined by the theological faculty. Said lecture shall always be reduced to writing in full, and the manuscript of the same shall be the property of the university, to be published or disposed of by the Board of Trust at its discretion, the net proceeds arising therefrom to be added to the foundation fund, or otherwise used for the benefit of the School of Religion.”

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PREFACE

IN the spring of 1927 the Faculty of the Vanderbilt University School of Religion elected Dr. Charles A. Ellwood as the Cole Lecturer for 1929. It was the judgment of the Faculty that the present trend in our social, scientific, and religious affairs called for a further utterance from the prophetic voice that spoke so effectively in "The Reconstruction of Religion." After careful consideration of several subjects for discussion in harmony with the purpose of the Cole Foundation, Dr. Ellwood, with the prompt approval of the Faculty, chose to study the problem of human progress under the theme, "Man's Social Destiny."

It was especially fortunate that Dr. Ellwood was privileged to spend the academic year of 1927-28 in Europe and thus was enabled to enrich his lectures with material gathered in direct observation of conditions among our neighbors across the sea. As a result the Cole Lectures for 1929 provide a constructive and critical study of the major values and prospective permanence of our present-day civilization. The lectures show especially the next steps that must be taken by our social, scientific, and religious leaders if they are to further the progress of humanity toward its God-given goal.

Dr. Ellwood insists that a worthy social science will not only have an adequate method and program of research, but as well a passion for the service and saving of mankind. As to physical science, he indicates that, if it is to prove a blessing and not a curse, it will be not merely concerned with the quantity of material assets which it places in man's hands, but equally concerned with the moral quality in men which makes them safe trustees of extraordinary power. "Our civilization is imperiled to-day simply because it is ill-balanced. Our spiritual culture lags so far behind our material culture in its development that we have no adequate control over the latter." Here we have the mutual task of science and religion. Dr. Ellwood's estimate of the task of the Christian Church is clear and impressive. "The building of a Christian civilization will be, equally with the saving of individual souls, the concern of the Church."

It will be seen from these suggestions that Dr. Ellwood's lectures make a volume which radiates a much-needed Christian optimism—an optimism tested in the fires of sincere scientific criticism and justified in the light of life's best-accredited realities. We publish these lectures with great confidence in their exceptional timeliness and abiding value.

O. E. BROWN,

Dean, Vanderbilt University School of Religion.

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