

**FACING THE CRISIS; A STUDY
IN PRESENT DAY SOCIAL AND
RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS. THE
FONDREN LECTURES FOR 1922**

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Facing the crisis; a study in present day social and religious problems. The fondren lectures for 1922 by Sherwood Eddy

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SHERWOOD EDDY

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The Fondren Lectures

Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Fondren, members of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Houston, Texas, gave to Southern Methodist University on May 10, 1910, a fund, the proceeds from which were to be used in the establishment of the Fondren Lectures on Christian Missions. The following paragraphs from the conditions of the original gift will set forth the spirit and purpose of the Foundation.

"The interest on the investment shall be used annually in procuring some competent person to deliver lectures on Christian Missions under the auspices of Southern Methodist University. This fund is dedicated to the foundation of a lectureship on Christian Missions in consideration of other donations made for the upbuilding of Southern Methodist University, and especially the School of Theology thereof and in the hope that something of good may come directly therefrom and that others more able to give largely may be inspired to devote some portion of the means which they hold in trust as stewards of the Lord to the increase of said fund or to some other laudable enterprise of our church."

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AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

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FOREWORD

We are facing a crisis in the world today. There have been crises in the past and doubtless there will be again in the future. But we are confronted with an unprecedented situation in our war-torn world. The late war has left us rent and divided in three great cleavages of humanity, in national, racial and industrial strife. Almost every nation is demanding self-determination; every race is claiming its equal and rightful place in the brotherhood of man; every class, especially the industrial toilers of the world, demanding economic freedom and a more abundant life. We are standing at the beginning of a new creative epoch in history, in a vast period of transition from the old order to the new. An old materialistic order of selfish privilege and competitive force, an order of imperialism, congested capitalism and militarism, breaking out periodically into overt war, is lying in wreckage all about us. But the building of a new order has already begun.

There is a crisis in our national and international affairs. Is war to threaten our final civilization or is it to be outlawed? There is a crisis in our industrial life. The writer on his last journey around the world found strikes in Japan, China, India, Egypt and throughout Europe, but he returned to find over three thousand a year in America. What is the meaning of this world-wide industrial unrest?

There is a crisis in our race relationships. The trouble in India, Egypt and other lands has its roots in racial as well as in national antipathy. There is a new race consciousness observable since the war throughout almost the whole of Asia and it is now spreading in Africa. The United States with her problem of immigration and an average of two lynchings a week or about a hundred a year, must face this challenge of the unsolved race problem.

There is a crisis in our religious life. We have made far more rapid advance in scientific discoveries in the material realm than in our spiritual life. The war has revealed fundamental seams of weakness in our civilization. We must rethink our position, restate our faith in terms of modern thought, and endeavor to reconcile the undoubted and incontrovertible facts of experience in the realm of religion and of science. This book is a plea that we face this crisis fearlessly and honestly, proving all things and holding fast the good, the true and the beautiful.

There is a crisis also in the life of every individual, who, facing the challenge of our turbulent times, is forced to make the transition from the mediæval to the modern point of view.

At the Des Moines Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement where some seven thousand students from a thousand institutions in the United States and Canada had assembled, the crisis created by the war was evident in one meeting where scores of questions were asked on the vital religious, social and industrial problems which these students were facing. The meeting was of such interest that

the experiment was tried in various colleges of this country and later in meetings for students in other lands as well. It was then that this strange fact was observed. We found that the students are asking practically the same round of questions in every college, in every country today. In the state universities of this country; in Cairo, or Assuit on the Upper Nile, in Turkey; in Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, or Sweden; in America, Europe or Asia we find students facing the same great questions. Many of these are the persistent problems that have always beset and baffled the human mind. Yet some face a new world with a fresh challenge in this period of reconstruction and of striving for the creation of a new social order. Many are demanding today a reinterpretation of old beliefs and a restatement of all our thinking in modern terms.

When asked to deliver the Fondren Lectures at the Southern Methodist University at Dallas in 1922, and later, the Sturtevant Lectures at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania, it seemed that no better theme could be chosen than "Facing the Crisis," to endeavor to answer briefly the questions of the hour that were actually being asked by the students themselves. They seemed to be indeed issues of universal interest, not alone to students but to all thinking men who have to face the problems of our day.

The questions asked fall naturally into two groups: 1. Religious and Philosophical; 2. Social and Industrial.

It is obvious that in the brief space of one short