

THE COMMONWEALTH OF SCIENCE*

INTELLECTUAL freedom is an essential condition of progressive human development. Throughout the ages, individual scientific workers have been forced to fight and to suffer in order that life and intellect may be preserved from the effects of unreasoning prejudice, stagnation and repression. To-day they feel compelled to proclaim their special responsibility in the struggle against any subjection which would lead to the betrayal of intellectual liberty.

The war now devastating our world involves an age-old conflict of ideas. Liberal minds of the last generation were convinced that the battle for independence of thought and free expression of opinion was finally won; yet once again this conviction is being violently assailed. The fight to maintain it must perforce be resumed, for the danger of losing the heritage of freedom seems graver than ever before.

During the past third of a century, changes in the conditions of life have come about, more profound than any in human history. Distance has been virtually abolished; cognizance of events has become simultaneous throughout the world; all men have become neighbours. Fresh discoveries open up undreamed-of potentialities for good or for evil, but their proper use demands correspondingly high ethical standards.

While only a century ago the village was an almost self-sufficing unit, to-day the world is our unit. To such a disturbing change of outlook and obligations, we are not yet attuned, and we must readjust our way of living, for only by the fullest and freest adaptation of ideas to new conditions can this readjustment be achieved. Intense mental effort and clear vision are now needed.

In the past, freedom for the written and spoken word was desirable; to-day, complete freedom of thought and interchange of knowledge and opinion are supreme necessities. Full freedom of expression is the very essence of science as well as democracy:

* The New Charter of Scientific Fellowship presented by Sir Richard Gregory, Bart, F.R.S., president of the British Association, at the end of the Conference of Science and World Order.

where thought is enslaved science, like democracy, withers and decays. Men of science must, therefore, declare clearly and emphatically the principles which underlie their beliefs and guide their conduct.

Accordingly, the principles of the fellowship of science are here affirmed; and it is maintained that any policy or power which deprives men or nations of their free practice convicts its agents of an iniquity against the human race.

DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES

1. Liberty to learn, opportunity to teach and power to understand are necessary for the extension of knowledge, and we, as men of science, maintain that they cannot be sacrificed without degradation to human life.
2. Communities depend for their existence, their survival and advancement, on knowledge of themselves and of the properties of things in the world around them.
3. All nations and all classes of society have contributed to the knowledge and utilization of natural resources, and to the understanding of the influence they exercise on human development.
4. The basic principles of science rely on independence combined with co-operation, and are influenced by the progressive needs of humanity.
5. Men of science are among the trustees of each generation's inheritance of natural knowledge. They are bound, therefore, to foster and increase that heritage by faithful guardianship and service to high ideals.
6. All groups of scientific workers are united in the fellowship of the Commonwealth of Science, which has the world for its province and the discovery of truth as its highest aim.
7. The pursuit of scientific inquiry demands complete intellectual freedom and unrestricted international exchange of knowledge; and it can only flourish through the unfettered development of civilized life.