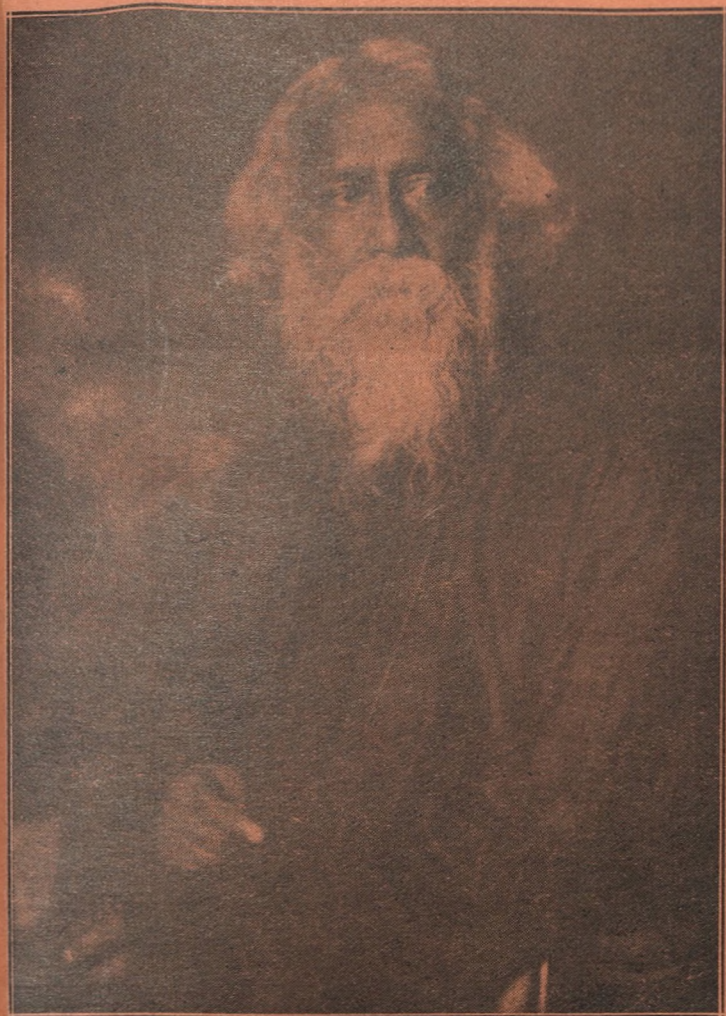


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DHARMA

TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE



Salutations from
ALL-WORLD GANDHI FELLOWSHIP
on his
SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY
May eighth, nineteen hundred thirty-one

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DHARMA

Edited by KEDARNATH DAS GUPTA

“Dharma is that which promotes spiritual growth and evolution and leads to the realization of the unsurpassable good, the Supreme Worth,” defined Kanada over 2,000 years ago (Yato 'bhyudaya-nihisreyasa-siddhih sa Dharma).

The Laws of Peace

A few Notes on

“The Plea for a Truce of God”

By A. RUTH FRY

Published by
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The Union of East and West

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THE LAWS OF PEACE

BY A. RUTH FRY.

British Secretary of the War Victims Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, 1914-24; author of *A Quaker Adventure*, *Quaker Ways*, etc.

An Address to the National Peace Congress, London, in June, 1935.

THE other day a young man who had been reading a 17th century book of religion said that he had no idea that the writer was so up-to-date. How many people do realise that truth is always up-to-date? The verbal clothes it wears may not be of the latest fashion, and we may need to take trouble to understand, but the eternal laws are unchanging.

There is a certain ambiguity when we use the word "laws", especially in this connection. We know that we are working for the reign of law instead of that of force. That is to say, that we desire that the relationships between countries, as now between individuals, should be regulated by reasonable agreement, by laws formulated by the different parties, and subject to alteration from time to time.

But at the moment I am concerned with laws in the other sense, that in which we speak of the "laws of science". These laws, as we know, are discoverable by man, and knowledge of them gives him power—power to avail himself of them for his own purposes. By knowing these laws, or some of them, mankind has achieved what to the savage are "miracles". Such are the flowers at the Chelsea Show developed on Mendelian rules. Such is encircling the globe by wireless speech.

Neglect these laws, and your aims are unattainable.

Yet, when we come to the moral sphere, complicated as it is by the intricacies of personality, and the quantities of contributing factors, we are apt to consider ourselves in a realm free from any "legal" certainty.

But I would suggest to you that the moral laws are as exact as those of science, and that it is as essential for us to obey them, in order to obtain the desired results, as it is to know mechanics in building a motor car.

I would urge that the Laws of God are not mere pious words, issued at the whim of a capricious Deity, but absolutely necessary for the happiness and prosperity of the human race, the basic rules for world society.

I know of a wise man who said to his children, "I need not punish you when you have done wrong, for your punishment will of necessity find you out. I need not scold you for your foolishness, for your folly will very

quickly bring its own punishment". The sinner and the fool cannot "get away with it", whatever appearances are to the contrary. They pay, and must pay, the price. And I suggest to you that our punishment, as sinning nations, is finding us out, and if we are wise it must drive us to reconsider our policies, and turn us from our ways of ignorance, however good have been our intentions.

There is a refrain running through some of the finest passages of the Old Testament, in which the prophet or seer plainly told the children of Israel, as we need to tell people to-day, that their actions could lead to nothing but disaster, and that only if they do right can their lives be lived in peace and happiness. It is that great "IF" which dominates our lives as clearly as it did theirs.

Let me quote two or three passages as illustrations. Moses said, "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments . . . that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear . . . I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish in that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land"

I suppose we have often thought of such exhortations as referring to the golden images and idols that the Israelites made for themselves. To-day, in our hour of need, they seem fraught with new wisdom.

Again, Isaiah told the people, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

"Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

And lastly, Amos wrote: "Seek ye the Lord, and ye shall live . . . seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night: the Lord is his name . . . seek good and not evil that ye may live . . . hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate."

When we come to Christ's words, we find, not a denial of these laws, but an immense amplification and completion, which throws a new light on the old words, and brings them for ever up-to-date. Far more than the words of the prophets have we thought that those of Christ were merely

impossible ideals, yet to-day we begin to see their absolute necessity.

Christ told us to seek the Kingdom of Heaven and the material needs would be added to us. On the contrary, all nations have energetically and selfishly sought to attain their own material interests, and we see the results to-day in world chaos and universal fear of even greater disasters.

Surely as realists we should exclaim, "Our policy so far has failed. What ought we rather to have done?"

Now it seems to me worth while to compare, for a few minutes, some national political actions, with the principles enunciated by Christ.

Christ said, "*Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you*". We remember, with shame, the propaganda for hate, not only during but after the war, when no good action of a German could be mentioned, much less commended. We remember the starvation of German women and children for long months after the Armistice by our blockade, in order, by coercion, to obtain a humiliating peace.

Can we be surprised that the result to-day is a renewed race in armaments? Do we not remember the words, "*For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes*". Is it surprising that we have crushed Liberal Germany, and have now to meet the intense Nationalism of Hitler?

What a lesson the result of the Peace Treaty should be to us, to teach us to disbelieve in the power or efficacy of coercion. Here we have an instance of a people brought to their knees by exhaustion of war, when the Allies had all the military power they wanted, to insist on Germany's unwilling signature to a peace she knew was unjust. Was our military coercion of the least avail? Or would it ever be? Did it produce the result we desired? No. We see plainly before us the growing antagonism of a people who know they were wrongly used, and who seek to obtain their rights by the same military, futile means. I think the hero of the story is Count Brockdorff-Rantzau, who told me proudly how he would not sign the Peace Treaty. Yet we must not be too much disheartened, for it is not much more than a century ago that one of the leading Quaker schools in this country purchased "Punishment Boxes" in which to shut up naughty boys, sometimes for as long as two days at a time! Happily they soon discovered that it did not have the desired effect, as surely nations, too, must soon see.

Do we ever think of the opposite policy, not coercion, but forgiveness? "*Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.*" Aren't we in prison now? And again, "*Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?*" Jesus saith unto him, "*I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.*"

Have we ever, as nations, thought that the duty of forgiveness is binding on us? Have we any idea of the immense power for good which would be released by it? Do we realise that it is the only force great enough to unlock the goodness in those whom we look on as wicked? But then we have forgotten also the words, "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" What wisdom! We, instead, have chosen the hypocrite's path, and while rendering lip-service to Christ we spend our energies on the very negation of His teaching, mass murder of our fellow-children of God, members of the same human family.

Again, Christ warned us not to judge, lest we ourselves be judged, not to condemn, lest we be condemned. Have we not spent a great deal of energy, for instance, in judging, with too often prejudiced eyes, the great experiment going on in Russia? How little are we able to judge, how impossible is it for us to know what we should have done in those incredibly difficult circumstances of the overthrow of an also brutal civilisation. Had we complete impartiality, we might have to write a black account of our own misdeeds, and have to see much greatness in the actions of the struggling Soviets.

If we had really remembered Christ's rule, "*All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*", should we erect tariff barriers to ruin the trade of our neighbours, depriving them of their means of livelihood, as well as our own people of the cheap goods they so badly need? Economic war is own cousin to military war.

Should we have spent 100 millions of money and wasted many precious lives in trying, in 1920, to invade Russia at Archangel, without declaration of war, in order to support the Government we wished her to have? Should we soon have forgiven such interference? Had we, on the contrary, remembered that it was said, "*Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together,*

running over, shall they give it into your bosom, for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"? Should we not rather have sent food-ships to Russia, in the days of her famine, instead of the threatening cruisers we were building at that time? Should we not now experiment with bombing the tribes of the north-west frontier of India with food, instead of with death, and see whether we could, like Theodore Pennell, make safety by their friendship?

When we did, albeit in a fumbling way, try to use generosity to a fallen foe, as did Campbell Bannerman after the Boer War, what a help it was in minimising the inevitably bad effects following war.

Lastly, Christ's words when Judas came to take Him, "*Friend, wherefore art thou come?*" Then "*Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword*", are surely inconsistent with the so-called "right of self-defence". Christ's reply to threatened violence was not a counter-attack, but an acceptance and a warning of the uselessness of such defence. Even the Crucifixion may be construed as "weakness", yet what failure was ever such a haunting and triumphant success as what seemed like the final end to Christ's teaching?

In these, and countless other instances, can we not trace the action of moral laws, and trace, too, our own difficulties to our negligences and offences? And I would suggest to you here that as a house builded upon the sand cannot be safe, no more can we have security unless we build the House of Europe on the rocks of moral laws.

No human relationships can be built on hatred and fear.

Trust between nations is as imperative as between individuals, and our senseless search for security by threats must be changed to friendly co-operation if the world is to be saved. Ever since the time of Constantine Christianity has been harnessed to the State. We may have to agree that in this way some torch of true religion was carried through the dark ages, yet, on the other hand, I think Dr. Clayton Morrison is right when he says, "Ever since Constantine took Christianity to the throne of the Cæsars Christianity has been a kind of house-pet in the Courts of imperial power . . . in the armed camps of warriors . . . in the Directors' room of Big Business. . . . We have made a startling discovery. We have discovered, first, that the Christian Church does not seriously believe in practising

the ethics of Jesus, and, second, that the ethics of Jesus cannot be practised in the kind of world in which we live."

To-day we find that a quite new situation has arisen. The era of state-harnessed Christianity which has obtained in most of Europe since Constantine's day is at an end, and we have enthusiastic anti-Christianity upheld by the State in the vast domain of Russia, and in the heart of Europe, Germany. Instead of lip-service to a State Church, there is a frank repudiation of Christian ideals.

Must we regret this? No, I believe not. Hypocrisy was a sin which Christ especially condemned, and this has cleared that hypocrisy away, and makes patent that the cruelty which the States desired to perpetrate could not be squared even with the most superficial adherence to Christianity.

This momentous change seems to me to emphasize certain things. First, it is clear that we can no longer slip along as nominal Christians; we must decide whether in very truth we would die for freedom to follow our consciences, as our forbears died, and won for us our precious liberty, or whether we would follow the majority wherever they led us. For such a choice has come to our fellow-Christians in some dozen countries of Europe.

In France, Philippe Vernier, imprisoned in solitary confinement a second time, for refusal to accept military service in peace time, faces the horror of continued living death in a cruel prison. We may feel in our freedom that such a witness must have an effect worthy of its bravery, but could we believe it, if it were our own life that we were giving up?

We see, further, that States have not really essayed to be guided by moral laws, however earnestly their individual citizens have endeavoured to be. Openly and unashamed, they have maintained a different standard. As we have seen, what State has ever thought of loving its enemies, of losing its life to save it? Of giving its cloak to him that asked a coat?

No. Selfishness has been glorified as patriotism, murder as sacrifice, and brutality as strength.

This seems to me to bear directly on our work for Peace. As slavery was abolished by the imperturbable energy of the absolutists, more than by the cautious endeavours of the step-by-step reformers, so I believe war will be cast out by the indomitable condemnation of the

religious forces of the world. No lesser power can eradicate so pestilential and so stupendous a weed as war. I cannot believe in the efficacy of the attempts to harness war, to cast it out, by promising to undertake it.

Beelzebub isn't very good at casting out little Beelzebubs! International bullets are as immoral as national. Nor are modified armaments really any better than unlimited, nor would such agreements be kept in the heat of war.

As the ex-Servicemen's deputation to the Disarmament Conference, representing eight million men, so aptly expressed it:—

“What matter to them, whether their homes are threatened by planes of one or three engines?”

“What matter to mothers, already mourning husbands, whether their children are to be killed by bombs of 75 or 105 mm., or their lungs eaten by yellow gas or green gas?”

“What they want is protection from all shells and all gases.”

No half measures will suffice.

I believe we need a band of devoted people, who are convinced that under all circumstances, and under all names, war is wrong; that it is an outrage on the divinity enshrined in man, a denial of the “reverence for life” as Dr. Schweitzer calls it. But condemnation is not enough. They must believe that the power of love is so intense that its moral temperature is as certain to melt the human heart as fire is certain to melt wax. They must believe that the wisdom of Christ is so great that it is possible to keep the laws of God, and to build a world community of States governed by these eternal truths, where love of country will be sublimated into work for the great human family. They must work as *world citizens*, thinking of the good of the whole, and no sectional interests.

The will of the people alone can work this great reformation, but I cannot but believe that, as the common people heard Christ gladly, so the peoples in all countries are waiting for such a lead. I believe they are ready for the splendid simplicity of the fact that war is wrong, as well as absolutely futile, and would rejoice to join a religious international.

Let us say boldly, “We will no longer tolerate the absurdity of making arms in order not to use them, the fallacy of living under the overshadowing fear of death from bombs and poison gas, when war is more terrible than anything that could happen without armaments.

Let us say, "We will no longer be cowards. We will do right fearlessly, knowing that good must follow, even if we ourselves should have to suffer. We will lead the world into the freedom of co-operation, admitting that we, too, have sinned, and must turn from our wickedness if we would live."

In our war on the roads, where thousands are killed every year, we are beginning to find that prosecutions are not so useful as calling into being the spirit of courtesy, of good fellowship. Like the old fable, we are finding that the north wind cannot pull off the man's coat. Let the sun but try, and the unaccustomed warmth will work marvels.

I cannot claim that I am saying anything new to you. A century before Christ, Cicero said:—

"And there will not be one law at Rome, and another at Athens, one law to-day, and another law to-morrow, but the same law, everlasting and unchangeable, will bind all nations at all times; and there will be one common Master, even God, the Framer, the Arbitrator, and the Proposer of this Law.

And he who will not obey it, will be an exile from himself."

Let us set our faces to be workers for this law!

If Moses came to this world to-day I think he would be amazed to find that we had no decalogue of international morals such as he gave us for individuals.

I suggest that an important first step for us is to work for such a code. I venture to suggest the following, drafted by my friend, Lady Gibb, and myself, as a basis:—

A NEW DECALOGUE.

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments . . . that thou mayest live . . . and the Lord thy God shall bless thee. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear . . .

"I denounce unto you this day that you shall surely perish."

The laws of God are eternal and inexorable, and no happiness nor prosperity can be lasting which are not based on observance of these laws.

Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life, He has made all things new, and blessed are the states that follow Him.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all material good shall be added unto you.

The morality of the nations must be as the morality of the individual writ large,

Therefore

- (1) The State shall not exalt the false gods of national glory, national pride, national greed, for the Lord God is a jealous God, visiting the disobedience of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of those that neglect Him, and shows mercy unto thousands of them that love Him and keep His commandments.
- (2) Every State shall acknowledge that all men are equally the children of God, and recognise the brotherhood of all men and the rights of primitive peoples.
- (3) The State shall not bear false witness against its neighbours, for Christ has said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you."
- (4) The State shall do no murder, nor order its subjects to kill.
- (5) The State shall not steal, nor keep what it gains by force, for Christ has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."
- (6) The State shall not covet its neighbours' wealth, nor its neighbours' territory, nor anything that is theirs.
- (7) The State shall not judge in its own case, for too often we fail to see the beam in our own eye, looking only for the mote in our brother's eye.
- (8) The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and no State shall fear the prosperity of another, but rather rejoice in it.
- (9) Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour States as thine own country.
- (10) The State shall not seek its own life, for whosoever would save his life, shall lose it.

Love is the law of life, for God is Love,

A FEW NOTES ON
"THE PLEA FOR A TRUCE OF GOD"

BY A. RUTH FRY.

The very grave international situation, which may have changed for better or for worse before these words are in print, has emphasized one important point. Although the forces making for war seem more dangerous than ever, it is quite clear that those who believe that only by moral powers can they be overcome have also increased and grown far stronger.

In 1914, as the Bishop of Bristol said in a recent broadcast service, only a tiny minority recognised war as the devilish thing it is now widely known to be, and that for 20 conscientious objectors then there would be a thousand to-day.

A very interesting evidence of the widespread interest in, and recognition of the Christian opposition to war, as entirely contrary to Christ's teachings, is to be found in a recent correspondence in *The Times*. Those who remember 1914 know how suddenly, and almost without protest, this country entered the war; indeed the almost universal expression was of the high ideals inherent in our action—ideals which were only too soon to be tarnished.

This correspondence was opened by George Lansbury, the veteran leader of the Labour Party in the House of Commons, a man who fearlessly believes that religion should be a permeating influence throughout life, not a mere Sunday observance. I once heard him say that you cannot serve God and Mammon: he had tried it and he knew, and no one will doubt which master he relinquished. So in this dark hour, when people are thinking in terms of threats, and coercion, and punishment and murder, Lansbury dares to bring them back to first principles—to the fact that God is Love. He says:—

"The terrible acceptance of future war as something we must prepare for as unavoidable is creating fear and despair among masses of people in all lands.

"Many voices are heard blaming this nation or some other. I think we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. Surely it must be obvious that once more in the world's history civilisation is at the parting of the ways. If we go forward along the road

which inevitably leads to war then we are all quite sure religion, morals, civilisation will all crash to ruin and the world once more relapse into barbarism."

After referring to the economic difficulties of the nations, George Lansbury continues:—

"As I see these things there is only the Christian way out, and once again in ringing tones mankind needs to hear the word of God calling all nations to turn away from strife and pursue the path of co-operation. No one will say there is not enough room, enough raw materials, enough markets for us all. I am certain that with the true Christian spirit applied the white and coloured races can co-operate to create a better civilisation than has yet been dreamed of. If the Churches, led by their leaders, will take the field and tell statesmen the solemn truth that Christ's teaching and the teachings of all great philosophers is not moonshine, not sentiment, but cold, solid truth, and has within it the promise of this life, a great revolution in men's thoughts and action will take place."

When words like this are printed on the front page of our leading newspaper, from the Leader of His Majesty's Opposition in the House of Commons, the man-in-the-street, who is much more ready for them than is often supposed, can take fresh heart and feel that *some day* this great cause will be won.

Mr. Lansbury amplified his letter by an address at the City Temple on August 25th, where an audience of 3,000 crowded to hear him. He reminded his hearers that it is no excuse for doing wrong to say that others are acting likewise, and he concluded:—

"Again I say I believe that, if our nation will go out into the world to-day, it can stop the Italian war, it can stop the German aggression, it can stop all aggression, if in the name of God, either led by the Socialists or led by those chosen to lead the Church of God, we say with united voice, We put our all into the arms of Almighty God, and we trust to Him and His power and His love, and we will no longer put our faith either in gases or guns or anything else of that kind."

Various writers have supported Mr. Lansbury, while others again have criticized him, for there are still very many people who can manage to think the present chaotic rivalries and mad hatred of the nations "practical" while they jeer at Christ's teachings as impossible.

The Archbishop of Canterbury responded to Lansbury's

“very sincere and very moving letter” and assured him that he had been considering for some time whether the united voice of Christendom could not be made audible. Such united action would obviously need careful preparation, and could not be carried out immediately. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster recalled the repeated exhortations to peace by the Pope, especially his impassioned appeal last April, with an unmistakable reference to the present situation.

Among the very first to support George Lansbury was Canon “Dick” Sheppard, who assured him the support of at least 50,000 men—perhaps very many more—drawn from various political parties and schools of thought. He concluded:—“That the ordinary politician should have no idea as to what is moving in the hearts of men is sufficiently ominous, but that the leaders of Christianity should be either ignorant as to what their faith commits them or reluctant to declare it seems to me tragic beyond expression.”

General Crozier, too, as a soldier who has fought in about 14 campaigns, realizes the truth of George Lansbury’s words, and is certain that the majority of real soldiers would agree that something must be put in the place of war, and what that something is is answered by his letter.

The dilemma as to what England’s action should be exercises many writers.

On the one hand, the word of England is pledged to Sanctions, as defined in Article XVI. of the Covenant of the League, and the breaking of a nation’s word spells disaster to any international security, while, on the other hand, Sanctions, if applied, may set fire to the inflammable material of heavily armed Europe. A solution seems only possible on the higher plane of Christian ethics, a change which would surely bring out the good latent in all men. Many of the letters, too, show a sense of the difficulties and hardships which are causes of unrest, and of the share of all nations in causing them, and therefore the common responsibility to solve them.

Lastly, Sir Owen Seaman has stated his belief that where two loyalties conflict the lesser must yield to the greater, the greater in this instance being our promise in the Kellogg Pact “to follow the way of peace”, to which the Sanctions of the League must give way.

The correspondence continues, and as I write the Council of the League of Nations is meeting, a meeting on which it is no exaggeration to say hangs the fate of the world.

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“The First World Fellowship of Faiths—a World’s Parliament of Religions”—held in America in 1933-34 83 notable meetings in which 242 significant addresses were delivered by 199 leading speakers of All Faiths, Races and Countries. (These are now published in a book entitled *World Fellowship*, popular edition, \$3.25 (13s.); De Luxe edition \$5.25 (21s.).

“The Second International Congress of the World Fellowship of Faiths” will be held in London in July, 1936. “Outstanding representatives of the great faiths of Persia, India, China, Japan, Europe, Australasia, America, and other lands will be called together—to give men an idea of the direction which the human race should take and of the world-order after which it should strive.”

A Third International Congress is contemplated in India in 1938. A Fourth in Japan in 1940.

Meanwhile—and constantly—in as many cities in as many countries as possible, City Councils and National and State Councils of the World Fellowship of Faiths are developing.

Twenty-five years of steady striving for Peace, Brotherhood and Progress are culminating in these worldwide activities: In 1910, in England, “The Union of East and West” began its work for Cultural Unity. In 1918, in America, the “League of Neighbours” commenced working for Racial Unity. In 1924, the “Fellowship of Faiths” began developing Spiritual Unity.

Incorporated in 1926, as the “Threefold Movement—Union of East and West, League of Neighbours, Fellowship of Faiths,” the work grew, in 1929, into the “World Fellowship of Faiths” which is—

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“Promoting Peace, Brotherhood and Progress by cultivating mutual Appreciation between people of all creeds, classes, conditions and convictions.”

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