

the plough



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"THE PLOUGH, Towards the Coming Order" is a quarterly journal edited for the Cotswold Bruderhof by E. C. H. Arnold. With such a group behind it, THE PLOUGH is an instrument for uniting more closely those who are seeking here and now, both in the Bruderhof and outside it, to live by the standards of the Coming Order of justice, love and brotherhood. The Cotswold Bruderhof would be grateful if all who see the truth for which THE PLOUGH stands would do everything in their power to draw the attention of others to it. A leaflet telling of the aim of THE PLOUGH and the life of brotherhood behind it will be sent gladly to all whose names are sent to the Editor as likely to be interested.

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THE PLOUGH

Towards the Coming Order

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The Individual and World Need

Each individual human being is a living, ^{zusammenhängend} coherent organism. There is a living, mutual relationship between all the organs in his body, and between the individual cells which build up these organs. They pass on the blood which courses through them to other organs. They invigorate and help each other. The secret of the animated body lies in the fact that it is one perfected whole, in which there is manifold movement: each member in all the organs plays its part in the structure of the whole, in such a way that even the individual cells, of which these members are composed, have their life in still smaller living units. The different phases and periods of life differ only in the degree of the intensity and extent of this life. The most living phase of each organism, even of this basic, primitive form of life, is the time of growth, of propagation, and of birth. That is the time at which the character of life itself can be most clearly seen. The secret of life is expansion, movement, community and reciprocity. Life is the conquest of isolation through community.

One might be so audacious as to see in this continual ^{Folge} sequence of division and union of the most primitive cells of life, the growth of a coherent and complete life. The ever-renewed relationship of so many thousand generations, expanding through division, seems to present to our mind the conception of the whole living world as a steadily growing, living body. These simple, primitive cells in the complete body of life should be the living substance of the whole. So the recognition of their nature should be decisive for the knowledge of life. This sea of dividing and fructifying cells which floods over and pours through the earth, should ultimately be held together by one complete soul. It should be made one living unit by one spirit.

The development of life on this earth, however, has not kept to that course. There is still to-day no society of the earth, still there is no community of man. But in the midst of these dismembered, dying and decaying men, in the midst of so many isolated and mutually opposed

men, there is working a hidden organism of new creation. There is one coherent human body, because the one spirit which is its consciousness is there. But we can see nothing of this hidden working of God until we have grasped that the present condition, both public and personal, is one of most extreme and desperate need. We must first become aware that the body of humanity is mortally diseased. Its desperate need—the fact that its members who conjointly should have been identified with its suffering are fatally dismembered—must have become our own greatest and most desperate need. Only then can the mystery of the Church touch us.

The apparently dual character of the need is basically one and the same disease—dismemberment as the root of world need, and the suffering of world need as isolation and detachment. Only so can we know the need of the world. Only so can we as individuals, identified with this need and bound together in it, come to have faith in its conquest. There would be no world need if there were no individuals who want to evade it, instead of giving themselves utterly to it. As long as there is world need, there are no single men who can free themselves from it, or who are not guilty of it.

Every man to-day knows himself to be wretched, as one who is against himself and divided within himself. He knows within his own breast the enemy whom he uses spitefully, because this enemy assaults him, wastes the property of his soul in dissipation, destroys his conscience and stifles his love; because this enemy lures him to such base action that he has to call out in his agony, "Why hast thou created me to this misery, my Father? Why hast thou made me in this duality? Why hast thou not given me unity and purity? Purify me, unify me, O ye waters! See, from the beginning of time, all thy children who know themselves have wailed and lamented over the number two." Two instead of one, that is the curse under which we suffer. Division in isolation, it is that from which the world suffers.

The general world need of our days is inextricably connected with the feeling of guilt in the individual, which comes from his torn self. It is the deadly weakness which is the result of sin, which, as separation, squanders the life-energy of love. It is the curse of half-heartedness and disunity which obstructs decision and fulfilment. The general suffering of public life is in unison with the personal guilt of the individuals. Here the sombre words of Schopenhauer must force themselves upon us: "If one wants to know the moral value of men in general, let him consider their general fate. This is want, misery, distress, suffering and death. If they were not as a whole so worthless, their general fate would not be so sad. If one could place all the misery on earth on one scale of a balance, and the guilt of the world on the other, the indicator would certainly stand still."

The discord between what should be and what is, the cleft between man's direct call and the inexorable fact of what he is to-day forces the question upon us again and again: "Where is the death wound of life; what has poisoned life? Is there a poisonous root out of which all suffering has sprung? Is there a poisonous spring of misery from which the death wound of world need must bleed ceaselessly—unless it is healed?"

No one has felt the suffering of man as Jesus did, and he has penetrated to and discovered the root of suffering as no one else has. He knew human need as no other did. He knew that this need has its root in the divided heart, in the torn condition of man's deepest being. He discovered the heart of man. He revealed the poison working there to be separation and withdrawal, disintegration and detachment. This blood-poisoning lies so deep, and has such a hold on men in general that it is impossible to measure the degree of individual guilt by the greatness of the suffering. On hearing the appalling news that Pilate had mingled streams of human blood with the blood-offering of slaughtered animals, Jesus said: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay. But except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Our whole life, the life of each of us in its whole context, has so fallen to decay, is so mortally poisoned, that no publicly condemned prisoner at the bar can be more guilty than we ourselves are. At bottom we all are condemned prisoners. The 'innocent' victim is as guilty as the murderer. To recognise this is to take the decisive step towards life. We must recognise 'life' as we live it to-day, our whole life, as wrong, dissolving and ruining everything, a personal wrong that at the same time is common wrong, our own guilt in the desperate need of the whole world. To make this most comprehensive and most personal confession of sin is the last and decisive step which we human beings can take.

We need nothing but veracity, the veracity of mind that sees things as they really are, to recognise in any section of life our terrific responsibility for the guilt of the whole. We need only look at the smallest among ourselves to feel the misery and guilt of general dismemberment at least, burdening us more than a hundredweight load. The fact that the child is lost in the midst of humanity, that the child's garden has become an empty, joyless desert, can show us in the most penetrating way how we have destroyed the unity of man. The earth has lost the paradise of the unity of God because the living connection between the unity of God and us has been broken. The worst reproaches and self-accusations will have to be heaped upon us that we,

in our selfish, individual life, could for so long pass over these terrific facts.

World need is revealed in children. The children of need grow up dwarfed and stunted. What a difference there is between such a dwarfed being and a normally grown child of the same age. This heavy sin of human society is seen in the most glaring light in the fact that out of this abysmal need a thousand ways lead to the most obscene crimes. Prostitution, as the selling of young bodies for miserable money, is in the highest degree a symptom of poverty. Prostitution mounts in proportion to the degree of unemployment and bad wages. In the same way the number of illegitimate births always falls and rises in accordance with the percentage indicating poverty. The indissoluble connection between the economic basis of the proletarian family and the degradation of its daughters on the streets or in brothels, is obvious. Their fate is to go under.

All these black rays, which come to us from the world of need—so near, and yet so far—are a signal of distress, an appeal that their darkness may be lightened. Call upon call forces the knowledge upon us, in spite of our opposition, that this whole need has one context, and that we all have a very heavy share in the guilt which has our whole life in its grip. They force upon us the obligation of receiving unto ourselves the need of the world, and admitting that its source lies in our indifference and individualism.

The need of to-day introduces us to the fate of the world and of humanity, the Nemesis of sin. This concerns the whole, it is not a matter of exceptions and rarities. The inevitability and generality of this fate hanging over humanity is its most terrible quality. No one can escape it by an attempt at flight. The inevitableness of disaster and of sin brings with it that final consummation of suffering, through which it becomes real misery. The futility of all efforts at remedy, the disillusionment which must follow human efforts to overcome it, brings that despair which is more than to be sick unto death.

In this, every tired and flagging or wildly despairing negation of life, and contempt of man, which seemed to be practically forgotten, return to us, proving clearly how far we are from having overcome them. Not a few to-day know themselves disappointed and disillusioned in their noblest expectations. It is as though they have lost all courage, because the holiest things upon which they had set their hope have been betrayed and smashed. They do not yet see this disillusionment as liberation from a false expectation, that the way might be prepared for that true faith without which all hope is a hollow lie. We men of to-day are far from this faith. Doubt seems to eat up all hope, doubt of everything, of the will and of the capacity of men to-day, of the whole history and ultimate future of man, and, still deeper, doubt as uncertainty of the

goal of destiny. Not a few give up all hope of the spirit, because they see madness, selfishness and betrayal everywhere.

This doubt of everything good in man bores its way in, as doubt in destiny and in the end of our existence, and forces us to the abyss of our existence, to the brink of absolute despair. Despair is the last hell into which one can sink. It means the shattering of all possibility of having faith; it is the ending of all hope. It shuts love out; it makes it impossible to continue to live. It is death in absolute destruction and dissolution.

In it we share the fate of Prometheus. According to the oldest myth, his agony when torn anew daily in the heat of the sun, seems to remain bodily pain, a purely physical agony. Prometheus, who brought men fire, hoping by so doing to raise them from their animal misery, has to suffer, helpless and unarmed, whilst the vulture of Zeus daily tears his liver—his liver, mark—so that this constant physical pain has to continue in ever-renewed agony throughout eternity. Our heart is in this position—from time immemorial the liver has been a symbol for grief of heart—when the world need daily tears our innermost being anew. The poet Aeschylus understood the myth in its original form in this deep, emotional sense. He transplanted the suffering of Prometheus into the agony of soul of the spirit, into the very deepest depths of life. Here it is into the titanic struggle with the deity that the bringer of fire to men had entered. For this he had to taste the deepest suffering he could possibly endure. In despair he had to experience that the nature of the deity was to him envious injustice. All that happened in the world was to him nothing but disaster, blood and dirt. The godhead whom one was supposed to honour had become to him a selfish, satanic being. The firebringer, who as half-god and half-man dared, without his permission, to want to bring men 'good,' this god himself now wants to destroy.

Prometheus is chained, mutinous, indignant and full of hatred, to the rock. As the vulture tears his 'liver', his agony becomes the deepest spiritual agony, absolute despair of spirit. It is this abandonment by, and enmity of, the deity which tortures him as the despairing doubt that there can be no god who does good. How otherwise could such universal suffering of injustice overshadow man with its evil will? Where man despairs, no god is living. When we despair, we despair of God. But when we despair of God, we despair of everything, of man, of humanity, of life. Prometheus had to despair, for he lacked the illuminating insight into the fact that no cultural progress can help torn humanity, but only and solely, the God of life and of love, whom men have lost. Instead of giving misleading and destructive gifts, he alone can and will create anew the lost possibility of life. Prometheus had to despair, for he was not able to perceive the unifying, light-giving spirit

of creative goodness, and his fight to the finish with the dark, dividing, destroying powers of fire.

Despair, just like faith, is concerned with God. Here it is revealed that sin, as separation, is ultimately separation from God. It is disharmony with God, who is the source and oneness of life. The root of misery, as Jesus knew, is the fall from God. Distress of conscience is the fear of being driven by the just God in his rage far away from himself. Faith believes in God as the spirit of unity, and for this reason, and only for this reason, has it faith for man, for the destiny which God has appointed him. Despair is isolation, a severed connection, a broken relationship, the opposite of love. Faith is confidence and union, a trust in unity which triumphs over all obstacles. Only faith is able to bear world need, because it knows the one who unifies, who is greater than all separation and division. Only love which comes from faith is in the position to derive power from suffering, the power which makes possible its overthrow in action. Only love can attain, in the absolute passivity of enduring to the full, to the greatest activity of the new achievement. As there is no faith without God there is no love without this faith.

There are always men who despair. For we are threatened in all directions by that which darkens the divine light. Despair slumbers in all of us, for in all of us that evil spirit is at work which plays out human fire, and the lying, dividing power of the progress of civilization and its devilish terms for existence, against the misery and torment of the present world order. Yet there are men everywhere who have faith, because the eternal light of the unifying goodness of God overpowers the darkness without being swallowed by it. Faith slumbers in all of us, for the revelation of the creative light lights each man who enters this dark world.

This faith can only set in at the very darkest point of the darkness of our world of death. He who tasted world need at its deepest was, like Prometheus, bound fast. But while Prometheus was fettered by chains in an eternal captivity in which he could not die, Jesus was brought by the nails that pierced him to liberating, unifying death. While Prometheus had kindled on the hearth the fire of human civilization, he brought a completely different fire, the fire of the revelation and atonement of the love of God. Yet he, just he, had to call out in the most extreme torture of soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He suffered more on the cross, in his believing, atoning spirit, than the suffering of human despair. We are not speaking here of the physical agonies of a bloody execution, although their reality had the deepest significance in the actuality and effect of his death. His torture was not like that of Prometheus, a half-human doubt as to the goodness and power of God. But it was the reality of his death, actual separation

from God—from the sole secret of life, and above all, of his life—which plunged him into the deepest agonies of extreme need. In this spiritual night of absolute abandonment, Jesus sank to the deepest depths of world need. In the boundless solitude of death, he became victor over the need of the world because he suffered it at its worst. Without having endured it to the full, he would not have been able to overcome it. Now he could pray for his enemies. Now he could cry, "It is finished!" The victory of the God of light, and his revelation of the ultimate unification of life, was won where alone the decisive battle could take place—in the darkest death. So, from this one decisive point comes a last possibility, in the midst of the fear and misery of the world, in the most extreme suffering of complete abandonment by God, still to have faith. There is a victory of resurrection in most deadly suffering. The resurrection draws near to this most awful death alone. The newness and unity of the coming life of God builds itself up only upon this deepest annihilation of loving life.

That is the mystery of the execution outside Jerusalem, that death was suffered in its deepest horrors, and just for this reason was overcome. Jesus died of the world need. Just for this reason he lives—to overcome it. We do not live, because we do not want to die. We do not want to overcome the need, because we want to avoid its deepest horrors. While Prometheus could not die, and so passed over the last misery of his torture; while he remained for ever hanging in despair, Jesus, dying, perfected the work in his death of complete abandonment by God. He could leave the gallows and the grave as the liberated and living one, as the liberating bringer of life. Crucified and condemned, pierced and dying, he was able to bring his work of union to perfection. He united mother and friend, he received the criminal into his fellowship. By forgiving them, he united himself with his enemies. He gave his spirit into the spirit of unity of his Father—that he might unite all his children. Thus in the breaking of his body, he created the new organism of the unity of God, the mystical body of the messianic Church. The body of the coming Christ, mutilated on the gallows, and even there created anew, is the sole, real unity of God in this torn, human world. The dark tragedy of his misery and death is the new beginning of his light and greatness. In this way he became the sole leader for all men, leading them into the all-suffering depths of world need, and out of its all-destroying flame.

Every struggle in which all is dared for the justice which loves all men, leads to death, as Jesus died. Where the need of the world is, the Cross is near. At this point the suffering of the whole world has gathered. There one who has died to this life, one who was stronger than it, became completely one with the suffering of the whole world, so that here for the first and last time the whole need could be held, grappled

with and overcome. In this infamous execution, the suffering that contained the extremity of all need became the liberating love which expressed itself in acts of union. Jesus laid aside all his own privileges and possibilities of power, to suffer the worst, defenceless, unto the laying down of his very best. Jesus did not seek death because he loved it or longed for it. He wanted life. He wanted life as that which life alone can be: unity, the overcoming of dualism, of dismemberment and of decomposition. Just for this reason he wanted it for all tortured by separation and detachment, for those suffering the depths of misery, for the poor, the sinners, the guilty and the despairing.

The battle in the spirit-world was decisive. The seeming passivity and lack of opposition perfected a work which the will of love and unity carried out against all the opposition of hatred and division. Here the decision fell which frees the earth from the powerful might of division and decomposition. The whole of suffering is gathered here for the ultimate solution of need. The destiny of life reveals itself in this death. Here God meets humanity in its deadly division and enmity. The unjust world, disunited as it is within itself, expels with the assembled powers of state, church and nation the one who wanted and lived, solely and completely, the goodness of God, the unity of all in all. Thus he proved that though in this world of open injustice goodness is overcome, in its overthrow the original and ultimate purpose of this world, the Word who is God, wins. Love was murdered, but love is stronger than death. So world history becomes world judgment, in that it itself is judged as unjust. And yet God still reveals himself in it as the only good and powerful one.

Against his will, the great 'anti-Christ' of our times has summed up the need here revealed and solved, this last and deepest guilt of our world: "Man cannot bear to let such a witness live . . . Once men sacrificed human beings to their gods. The highest, however, is to sacrifice God himself . . . To sacrifice God—for nothing! . . . Where has God gone? We have killed him. We are all his murderers. The holiest and mightiest that the world has ever possessed is bleeding beneath our knives. Who will cleanse us of this blood?" The old Christian, old German Passion play has seen just as deeply: "Oh, great need! God himself is dead!" (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844—1900.)

Behind the need of the world, in the social sin of all, the hidden beast of prey of the abyss, the sin which transgresses against God, lies in wait. In the death of Jesus, world need is clearly seen as this ultimate world guilt. It could only be overcome at the very height of its wickedness. Here the deepest source of all suffering is discovered—"to be loveless and without God." "Nothing is lost, nothing, but the soul which lost its God." To see this fact means asking the question to which the terrific weight of loss forces us: Is God lost beyond recall? Or is God, in the

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revelation of his loss, in the hopelessness of our recalling what is lost, nearer than ever because he is now seen in clear contrast to ourselves, and to our life? Man has killed God. Now it is seen that religion is not of man; now it is revealed that human religion is without God. Now it must be seen whether God turns his heart away from this band of murderers, who in their wicked madness tear each other and their God, or whether he, as the perfect Good, reveals their sin to them in this extreme need.

Here the wonder of creative power sets in. Here the life-giving spirit of perfect love is able to reveal himself. The risen Christ brings the nearness of God and his renewing life to men, as never before. Jesus opens out the new way of God into the world, the way of seeking out the darkness without falling a prey to it. Only now can God open his heart, full of forgiveness and reconciliation, to men, in the pouring out of his Spirit. Now God becomes bright and clear for all who see him. For now the contrast between his love and the unity of his life, and our world, has been revealed. Jesus had to die, because in a world ruled by Mammon, in the sphere of impure spirits, among men filled with thoughts of murder, and of lying and hypocrisy, he went the way of love and of power. This shining way leads from his grave, to meet the future!

Now God has come near us. The way of the death of Jesus is God's way to the resurrection of Christ. He who will fight the fight with him must be ready to be put out and rejected, persecuted and killed, as he was. Thus the need and misery towers to its peak. To will to realise the will of the eternal Spirit, in this oppressed material world; to will that the earth and all material things might be used for God and for his Spirit alone, means to become one with the God of a thousandfold agonies. It means drinking the cup of bitterness to the dregs. It means suffering death with God.

To want the body and the earth for God brings death, real death of the body, hateful, earthly death. For 'life' is unjust, and will tolerate no justice. When the spirit of helpfulness, the spirit whose will is love and the fellowship of love, seeks to transform the matter, the material things of this world, immediately the opposing spiritual power arises, in all its murderous might. He who attacks the evil must die. Thus, when the way and the goal are clear, one must sacrifice himself and all he has. However painful, all martyrdom without the goal, and not on the way, is nothing. Only witnesses are martyrs. Thousands have been hanged and crucified. But only Jesus could so die that new life grew out of his death. Only in Jesus does life come through death. Need and death in themselves are nothing but an end, a precipice. Christ alone is the risen one, who reveals the living God as the power that wakes from death. The tidings of the execution, of the extinction of the life of

Jesus, are inseparably one with the fact of the resurrection, with the new beginning of the coming Christ. The present Christ, who is the Spirit, bears all the need, which his heart comprehended in his death. He brings with him the power which, as the mystery of his resurrection, works the unity of life which is of God.

When one has grasped this fact, nothing can hold him in the death of despair of God, for he has experienced the ultimate effect of all despair—its conquest through faith. The Christ within us is the certainty of the expectation that everything will be united, and perfected in shining love; that God lives, and comes to us! Even when we do not succeed in finding men who show us the life and the working of God in the spirit of pure love, Jesus is, and remains, love realised in deed, the liberation and redemption from all the need and guilt of man, the revelation of God. That once in history perfect love became deed, became man, means that community with this one, new, first member of mankind is the assurance of the life of unity that can, and must, become reality. No one needs to despair of love. No one needs to despair of God. Love has appeared; God is tangibly near! God comes to men in the crucified Christ, in his rising from the dead, in the pouring out of his Spirit, in his future Kingdom, that they may suffer with him the death of evil, the destruction of man as he is, that they may win faith in forgiveness, resurrection and union—faith in God.

Thus Christ reveals the ultimate future, which is God's, when this cleft corporeality, this body of disunited man, which bleeds from every wound, is brought together as one sole organism, a living and inspired unity of spirit-filled cells. That which we sensed at the beginning, but felt to be too daring to surmise, the vision of the whole earth body, covered by countless living creatures, united, borne and directed by one Soul and by one Spirit, whose mutual relationship is the unifying life of the cosmic world of this earth, this vision will be realised. It is God's future for the earth. It will be peopled by a unified humanity. No single, detached and isolated individual will be there, because all men will live in harmonious, mutual relationship, ruled by one Spirit, by God himself. This unity, which results from a new act of creation, will show its reality in the mutual service of common work, in the solidarity of life upon this planet, the earth. Thus this earth, and the men upon it, will be one great whole, the unity of the Spirit which comes to it. Death is overcome, decomposition and isolation become ineffective. As life from the dead, this new life creates unity in all those who have the spirit of unity. The life of unity is the eternal life that never passes away, for it is the life in which everyone, and everything, is comprehended. As a decisive, historical parable of God it shall rise resplendent on this earth, in a mankind made new, set free, and united.

EBERHARD ARNOLD.

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PAST AND PRESENT

The Holy Nation^{*}

Sixteen hundred years have passed since the Christian Church won what she might well deem the greatest triumph in her history. In the year 312, Cæsar Constantine, in obedience, as he afterwards told the historian Eusebius, to a vision seen in the sky, took the Cross of Christ for his battle-flag and overthrew his rival Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge . . .

Students of the Gospel might indeed question the belief then prevalent, that the sword of an earthly conqueror could hew the way to victory for the armies of the Cross. History has dealt that belief many a shrewd blow, yet it remained vigorous through the Middle Ages and it is widely held to-day. Constantine has had many successors as Champion of Christendom, from Charlemagne and Olaf Tryggveson to the Most Catholic and Most Christian monarchs of our own times. With a few notable exceptions, the compact then made by the undivided Church has been ratified by the fragments into which it was torn by the primary schism of the eighth century and the multiple fissions of the sixteenth and the nineteenth . . .

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Christian men smote and slew, like Elijah or Jehu under the older Dispensation, in the name of God; as champions of His truth, and of liberty to worship as conscience deemed right. Cromwell claimed as we know to wield "the sword of the Lord and of Gideon." But in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the transfer of allegiance begun in the days of Constantine was all but complete. The civilized world, split into fifty jealous nationalities, fought as secular nations have always fought, for secular ends, for commercial and territorial dominance; and the Church has lacked either the will or the power to restrain its members from slaughtering one another in the quarrels of Mammon. The "national" Churches, in full subjection to the secular power, have allowed themselves to be dragged unresisting in its train, if indeed they have not actively helped to inflame the national bellicosity. Even the Church of Rome, asserting as it does a super-national status, makes no claim to arbitrate when its members are arrayed on opposite sides of an international dispute. Nay, its very priests are now suffered to serve in the hostile ranks and strike each other down with bullet, bomb or bayonet.

**By the author's permission, we are allowed to print the following extracts from a paper written at the time of the Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship fourteen years ago, and entitled "The Holy Nation".*

I have emphasised the failure of the Church to prevent war between her members because the mutual slaughter of Christians affords the most flagrantly obvious instance of disobedience to the Master's law. Other no less lamentable evils are however rampant among us which we have for the same reason failed to check; for the reason namely that we have accepted the standards of the world instead of upholding our own unalterably in the midst of it. A factory or workshop in time of peace is perhaps an even worse training place for Christian character and morals than an army on campaign. Secular warfare exacts a high degree of physical courage, of endurance, and of self-sacrifice. The soldier must refuse no labour and no hardship, and must be ready at any moment to lay down his life for his comrade or his cause . . . Rightly understood, the aim of industry and commerce is the mutual satisfaction of those mortal necessities which are inseparable from our sojourn here on earth . . .

In the last two centuries, the power of man over the forces of nature has been increased manifold. Cooperation has been rendered possible and its advantages demonstrated to a degree before unknown. Yet the blind greed of mankind has so counteracted the blessing we might hope to derive from this enhancement of power, knowledge, and opportunity, that many will be tempted to doubt whether our supposed gains have in fact advanced the happiness of the race . . . The atmosphere of Commerce is one of mutual hostility rather than of mutual help. The daily waste of effort, the wear and tear of human life caused by this degeneration of Commerce into a species of masked warfare are incalculable. Yet so deep is the paralysis which the system's long continuance has brought upon its victims, so strong are the interests which have become bound up with its maintenance, that many despair of putting an end to it save at the cost of a fearful revolution bringing death or misery to countless millions . . .

Until the native liberty of the Church is reasserted in principle and re-vindicated in action, all attempts at reform are doomed to disappointment and failure. For it is in the Church, and there alone, that a dormant Power survives on earth strong enough, if rightly directed, to shatter both militarism and commercialism and to achieve the liberation of mankind.

When the Church accepted the position offered her by Constantine, she parted with one of her most vital attributes. She surrendered her *nationality*. The loyalty she claimed as the Holy Nation, the successor of the Jewish Theocracy whose passing was marked by the rending of the Temple veil on Good Friday, was thenceforth to be shared with a secular organization with aims and methods widely different from her own. Like her Master, she was taken up into an exceeding high mountain, and the kingdoms of the world were spread out before her

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eyes. In her case the temptation prevailed; the compromise was made which has fettered her ever since. Abdicating her right to settle the disputes of her own members; rejecting her privilege of overcoming evil with good; and exchanging her spiritual sword for the carnal weapons of heathendom, the Church has in the long run lost far more even of earthly power and influence than she has gained. Since the French Revolution, this is abundantly manifest . . . If truth now bids us trace it to the compromise of her principles, the surrender of her freedom, and the abandonment of her nationhood sixteen hundred years ago, let us do so in the hope and with the prayer that even now, though it be at the eleventh hour, her pristine radiance may through an act of repentance and sacrifice be restored.

Consider for a moment the opportunity which confronts her to-day; the cry for help which arises from the civilized world . . . Many have set their hopes upon International Labour Associations, aiming at the communization of capital and the abolition of war. The first of these received its death-blow from the war of 1870 and the ensuing "Commune." A second perished in the war of 1914, when French and German socialists voted war-credits and marched out to annihilate one another. The so-called "Third International" of Moscow has failed to justify its name. All alike have sought to build Utopias on the sand. We Christians, who alone possess the true Foundation, will not build at all.

A more promising attempt to meet the challenge of "Peace or Destruction" is the League of Nations, for whose inception and achievements we may be profoundly thankful. But how can Christians see a purely secular League assume thus the championship of peace and brotherhood among mankind, and not be bowed to the ground in shame for our testimony ungiven, our calling unanswered? Are we to stand helpless while the banner we have allowed to lie in the dust is carried to victory by the hands of unbelievers? Have we indeed read 'Mene, Tekel, Upharsin' on our temple walls?

There is no time to be lost. Without delay we must reassert our Nationhood, and claim for it the loyalty which in default of a higher object has been divided among the secular communities. We are bound, so far as opportunity offers, to help and serve those among whom our earthly lot is cast, living in orderly submission to secular authority so long as its mandate does not run counter to our conscience. The new Jerusalem can only be built by men and women prepared to set the laws of Christ before all else; who are Christians first, and only afterwards French, German, British, American, Ethiopian or Chinese.

The Church has demanded too little of us. Having herself compromised with the world, she has allowed her members to make compromises

on their own account, comfortable for the moment, but disastrous eventually to her purity and her influence. The multiplication of Orders and Sects is a reaction provoked by this lowering of the Christian standard . . . To erect a Community thus independent of the world on the strong and simple lines of the Christian law may tax the wisdom, courage, and devotion of several generations. But we have the Foundation. We can at least *begin* to build, even if we must bequeath to those who come after the completion of the design . . .

Among the first ventures of the Community must be the foundation of a Christian City, surrounded by a tract of land sufficient for the maintenance of its inhabitants . . . The Christian Nation will supply her citizens with the material necessities of a simple and healthy life; with bread, milk, clothing, shelter, warmth and light. For this purpose it will own or control farms, factories, mines and transport, worked by Christian hands under Christian laws. Even as the nations of the world have claimed from their citizens two or three years' apprenticeship to the art of war, so our Nation will expect every Citizen to take his or her turn (as our great Pattern Himself did) at the manual labour which the satisfaction of physical need requires. Only thus can we escape the not wholly unjust reproach of a popular writer who declares that the "sons of Martha," to whom "is Belief forbidden" perform the dangerous and dirty work of mining the coal and driving the train, while the "sons of Mary" slumber peacefully in the Pullman car. No stigma will attach to work shared by all who possess the bodily strength for it, nor will anyone be denied the opportunity for mental culture or forbidden to employ for the common good the talents lent him by God.

Our Citizens must forgo, at least for a season, luxuries that many citizens of the world enjoy or hope to enjoy. The sacrifice will be gladly made. A frugal sufficiency shared with all will, in the long run, bring more happiness than abundance correlated with the want of others. If man's average standard of physical well-being is lamentably low, the reason is to be found in human fear and human selfishness. Inheritance and experience have made these instincts part of our nature. Nothing can change that nature save the grace of God. But how can we look for any fresh outpouring of the Divine grace so long as the Christian Church — which is the appointed conduit of that heavenly stream — is content to worship her Master on Sundays, while for the rest of the week she worships with the world at the shrine of Mammon; in other words, of selfish luxury, of secular patriotism, and of Godless philosophy?

The basic principles of Christian economics may be set forth in a very few words.

"There is no wealth but Life." *

* Ruskin : "Unto this last," *Ad Valorem*.

The fertility of the earth suffices abundantly for the bodily needs of mankind.

All who are willing to work have an equal right to eat.

None are entitled to luxuries whilst any lack necessities.

Private property, if tolerated at all, must be held in trust for the Community.

Many non-Christians have seen the truth of these principles, and would fain embody them in a secular community. But the disruptive forces of fear and selfishness have proved hitherto strong enough to prevent their adoption or to defeat their success. Christendom, weakened by its own divisions and by its compromise with the world, has equally failed to apply them; but Christendom holds the key which others possess not. At this moment we have an opportunity, unparalleled perhaps for sixteen centuries, of using that key and entering into our inheritance. Are we going to seize the occasion, or allow it to pass away? . . .

Once founded, the Community would look for its maintenance and expansion to the industry of the many, not to the accumulated savings of the few. Itself would produce no millionaires, and no paupers. With aims and methods differing widely from those of the world, it would achieve a social and individual well-being so remarkable as to move the world nevertheless to envy. It would reveal, for the first time in history, of what Christianity as a social force is capable . . . Our Citizens' attitude towards the secular governments within whose territory they may be living will be one of loyal service and peaceful cooperation in every good work. We must expect imposition of tribute and custom, even though we provide our own public services. But our conscience must be free. We can take no vows of unconditional obedience, either civil or military; and this refusal may exclude us from secular franchises, and under some governments may expose us to persecution. Others will welcome colonists whose industry is likely to promote the temporal welfare of their neighbours; and it is to their territory that we shall look when we seek location for our Cities.

It is obvious that a truly Christian Community must itself settle any disputes that may arise between its members. We need look no farther than St. Paul's opinion of those Christians who in his day, laid their claims before a non-Christian court . . .

Prisons will be unknown amongst us; punishment we shall leave to God. Those whose weakness may violate the laws of the Community or offend against Christian morals will be subjected, with their own consent, to restraint or discipline whose aim is their restoration to moral health. Moral and physical disease are twin-born of the same parent, the father of all evil. Both must be combated in the same spirit and with the same object; often by the same methods. Through physical means, health may be restored to the soul; through moral treatment,

the body may be freed from disease. Many know this, but the traditional divorce between the treatment of crime and the treatment of bodily disease is too strong for them. A Christian Community will sweep the barrier away. The curative art is one: the preventive art is one. The world practises the former, if blindly yet with some diligence; the latter it neglects.

The importance of Education in a Christian Community is difficult to exaggerate . . . The first duty of Christian parents is to train their children in the Christian Faith . . . Our common Christianity must pervade the school through and through, its playground as well as its class-rooms. Everything that is taught in it will be taught in the light of the Incarnation . . .

Briefly to sum up our thesis . . . The time is ripe for us Christians to assert again that sacred Nationality founded by God when He called Abram out of Chaldaea, and refounded at Jerusalem on the Pentecost following Christ's ascension into Heaven. It has been God's will to work through the leaven of a chosen Community. But the leaven must be pure and strong and uncorrupted if it is to do His work.

The Christian Nation must claim full independence both politically and economically. This is essential not merely because the biddings of secular governments clash with the biddings of Christ, but because the military and commercial fabric of secular civilization ensnares and fetters at every turn the Christian who wishes to follow his conscience and to do the thing that is just and right and brotherly. The call is for a living and growing *nucleus* of men and women who will put loyalty to Christ before all else, and will work and pray for the rebuilding of Jerusalem here on earth.

One of the first steps to be taken to secure our economic independence is the foundation of a Christian City with enough land around it to supply the physical needs of its citizens. Frugality and simplicity of life, and the sacrifice of many comforts, will be required of the pioneer. Industry, education, law—in a word, the whole social life of the Community—will be based on Christian principles for Christian people . . . From such a concentration of Christian life and thought, embodied in a world-wide Nationality transcending in practice as well as in theory all distinctions of race and culture, the profoundest results may be expected. Once again the world would be aware of a Christendom with a mind, a character, a purpose of its own; no longer inert by dilution of its vitality, but intense, vigorous, potent, sustaining and illustrating the doctrine which the Churches proclaim by the life which the Nation lives. We often suppose that our task is to Christianize the nations. So, in a sense, it is. But we must begin by re-nationalizing Christianity, so that we may speak to them as nation to nation. We are told that the peculiar culture of each race and language is a precious inheritance

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which Christianity must preserve and sanctify. So it is. But there is a culture more precious still; the social and intellectual life which springs from our common faith, but cramped by many a secular band remains as yet in undeveloped infancy. Not till the Christians of India and China converse with those of Britain and France as fellow-Citizens may the treasure of the races be duly mingled, or Christian civilization expand in unfettered growth.

The scheme now submitted to the Churches is the outcome of many years' observation and reflection. If it runs counter to some of the most powerful currents of the time, the Gospel on its first proclamation was at a like disadvantage. The Gospel was of God, and drew to it the children of God. If the ideas here set forth are of God, and the time indeed be ripe for their realization, they will draw to them the men and women who shall build and rule the restored Commonwealth of Christ upon earth . . .

Work and Handicraft in the Spiritual Culture of the Church

Experience must find expression. It seeks to express itself in some form.

The joy of man is his creative work. Through the will which has been given him by the Creator, he is filled with an inexhaustible urge to realise in material form all that he has inwardly sensed or seen.

Work is the moulding of material; it is the transposing of experience into concrete form; that which is felt or seen inwardly is brought to expression in matter.

The hand is the interpreter of the soul.

Through handicraft matter wins life. But only the craftsman who knows his material and how to use his tools will produce something genuine. He will let the peculiar nature and beauty of the material speak, and not produce an outward effect which is not genuine through and through. This demands long schooling, knowledge, much practice and, above all, a very clear sense of what is possible and appropriate. In the last resort it is a case of knowing that something must be just so and not otherwise. This does not cut out variety, which we also meet in nature; but it means that each piece, each object is one completed whole. The pictures of the craft work of the Cotswold Bruderhof give an example of this within the department of wood-turning.

The simplest form gives the clearest impression.

DISCERNMENT OF THE TWO SPHERES WHOSE POWERS ASSAIL MAN

Man is constantly and everywhere receiving impressions. It is therefore necessary to find what is essential in this bewildering chaos of thousandfold impressions. All that happens has its source within the circuit of two spheres. Man can perceive nothing whose source is not in these two worlds. Out of the fullness of emotional experiences one must find the power and working of the creative spirit. Its power is revealed in the Truth, the one Truth which forms and holds the whole cosmos together, which has always been, is working now, and will always be—the Truth as the Word, as the Light, as the Life. It is the divine urge of the creation to unity, to all-comprehending unity in love. In it is harmony. It is the strength and working of the Power that binds.

It is the Truth of the one, pure and holy Spirit.

In opposition to this is the sphere of the spirit of the earth. As the opponent of the Spirit of God, its influence eats its way into all that has been created good. This spirit reveals itself in the urge to scatter and disintegrate; it reveals itself as the destructive force of division. Its effect is separation and constant sin against life. It is the destruction of life; it is numbness and death. It is the spirit whose power holds sway over our now cold Earth-planet. It can no more produce true life than cold earth can produce flowers and grass. Their life, like all life, is only awakened and made to grow through the light and power of the Sun. As the spirit of the age, the spirit of time, it has a powerful influence on all that is temporal, and opposes what is eternal and absolute by using events to emphasise the laws peculiar to matter. It is the dividing principle.

The powers of both these spheres work upon the soul of man. Men must differentiate between feeling which is earthbound and feeling which is controlled by the Spirit; between what is subject to the spirit of all that is earthly and limited by time, and the life which lives in the reality of the one Spirit of Light.

WORK AND EXPRESSION IN FORM AS A HOLY SERVICE THROUGH THE CALL OF THE SPIRIT OF UNITY

One must decide in favour of the one holy service of Truth, inspired, believed and performed through the grace of the Spirit of God. Through the commission given by it, all inspired and vitalizing work, all expression in concrete form and shape, is carried out. Truth seeks expression in the vocation of man. Truth is realised in the material, in matter. It gains life and the opportunity to speak—to speak in its own peculiar way. Thus to be directed by the Spirit is the purpose for which material exists. Only the Spirit knows the secret of matter—

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the Spirit, and those who listen to his voice. In the re-creation of unity, that for which matter exists is realised. This new creation of unity is the one essential for all that has form.

Work becomes the deepest realization and fulfilment of the call of man. Work effects harmony between matter and Spirit. It does so in the service of Truth alone, and to honour the sole Creator, God. The expression of an experience of the Spirit is a proclamation of Truth. Through the call, man is given creative power. Truth is recognised in vision: in work it attains expression. Life arises as a result. Life comes into being through the descent of the Spirit of Unity.

There is nothing which has not been destined for this accord with the highest Spirit. All who work creatively, and the whole creation, animated and moved by the Spirit which rules over all worlds, join in the richly varied tone of the great world-harmony. The greatest and highest is sensed by individuals, and the individual is drawn into the universality of the all-embracing Spirit. The symphony of the highest unity, which is the Spirit, binds the individuals who have been called to be one in a circle in which all work and live as brothers and sisters.

THE NATURE OF TRUE CULTURE

Where all powers exert themselves fully in work for the whole; where, grasping the call in all its depths, they supplement each other in communal work—there is culture. Culture comprises all the powers of light and of life. In it the uniting principle holds sway, in it all the living individual members are united as a living and complete organism. Individuals are never the source and stream of life—the all-embracing and all-uniting Spirit alone is that.

The last possibility and deepest fulfilment of culture is the Church of those who sacrifice themselves in love. Surrender to the uniting Spirit means ultimately giving up one's own life, one's own ego. True life is won in giving up individual personality in devotion to the higher Cause of the Spirit. Then one is free indeed for the creative forming of matter under the guidance of the Spirit.

It is only when one is brought low in the realization of one's absolute insignificance, that great reverence and honour for the Creator and his creation—perfect love in its widest and most comprehensive sense—break in.

Thus culture is born, as a new creation from above. Its opposite is cold organization which, in truth, chokes life. Its author is the spirit of Power, and its work to do business through cold direction and management. It is served by the will to Power of the individual. Its nature is to be unfree. Great, yes, gigantic structures arise in this way, but from the beginning they bear the death germ of judgment within them.

Living community work, the brotherhood of work in building the

City, is quite different. There the circle of filled hearts is completed. Faith mounts upwards like a flame: strength pours straight down from above. The circle radiates light outwards. The stream of strength from above, alone, is the strength to work below.

THE FIGHT TO WHICH WE ARE CALLED

It is the will of the Spirit that the individual parts of the organism should be held together as one whole. This is the aim of the whole creation. All that is created longs for redemption from duality to the harmony of unity. This takes for granted the fight against all that divides, all that has its source in the circuit of power of the earth spirit.

The will to unity and the will to division and isolation appear in the present age to be inseparably linked, if only in the fact that they are constantly at war with each other. To desert the will of the Spirit, which is always unity, means destruction of life. Again, the killing of all self-will leading to division means the winning of life.

Resurrection only comes through death.

The axe severs the tree utterly from its former connections in life. But the Master of the Universe calls to the new form, to the new being, to the new life: through his called messengers the new creation is revealed in material form.

GEORG BARTH.

Easter at the Bruderhof.

FROM THE BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY GROUP.

On Thursday we left the dirty air of slum, factory and prison for the beauty of the open country, where field and forest reflected God's goodness very clearly in the warm spring sunshine. Never in our lives had we experienced such a hearty welcome as that accorded us upon arrival at Ashton Keynes.

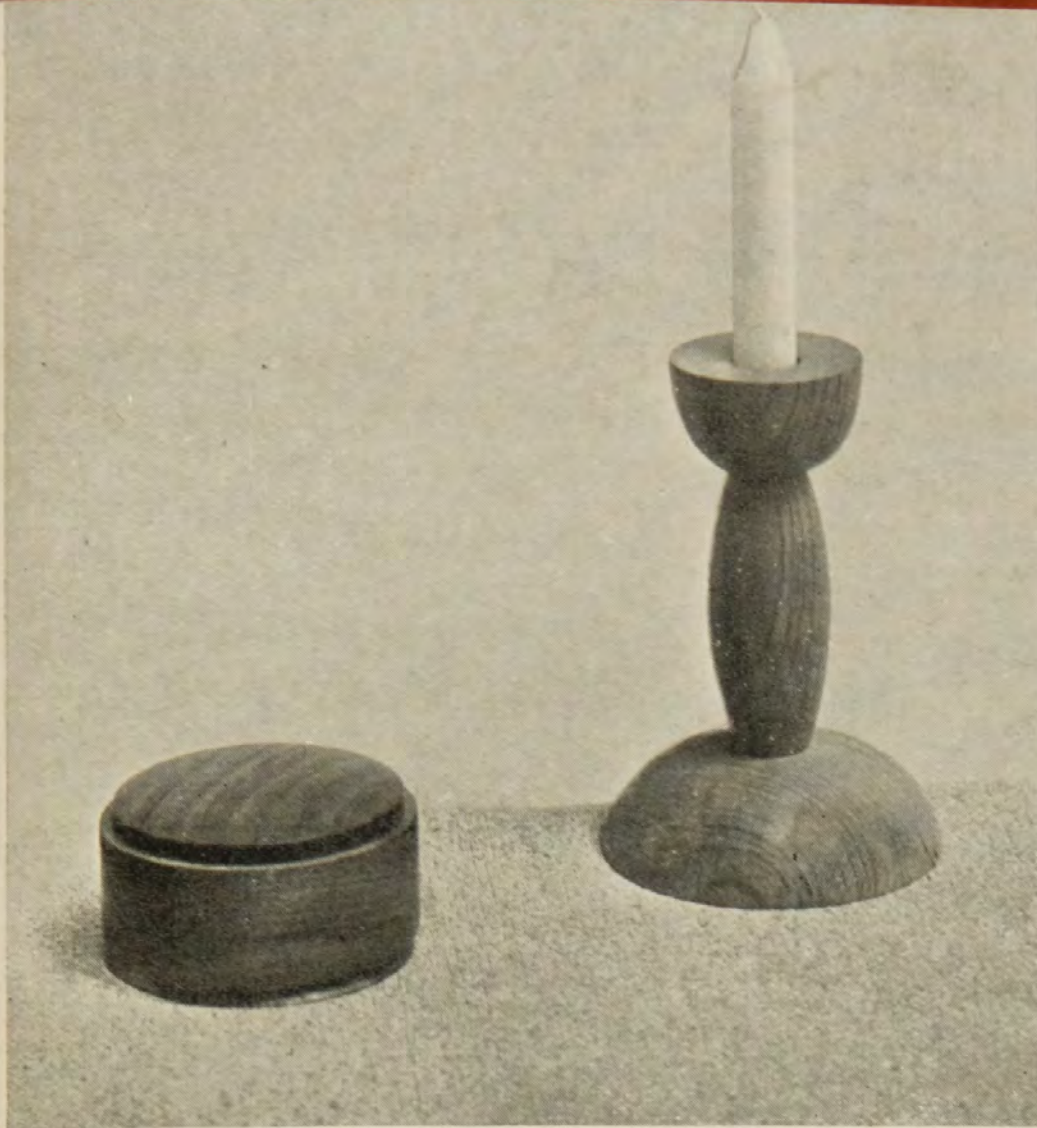
On Good Friday, it was felt that there was nothing that we as human beings could say, in view of what happened to Christ on this day, so meals were taken together in silence which was both impressive and helpful to all.

We began work early on Saturday, and whether helping to make the children's garden or mixing concrete or working in the kitchen, we were all able to share the enthusiasm and joy of those who are bravely building up a new order of society.

The following day was Easter Sunday and was full of wonderful surprises. From five o'clock in the morning a small company of Bruderhofers went about singing Easter Carols and hymns, and as we caught the praise of men mingling with the calm beauty of nature at dawn,

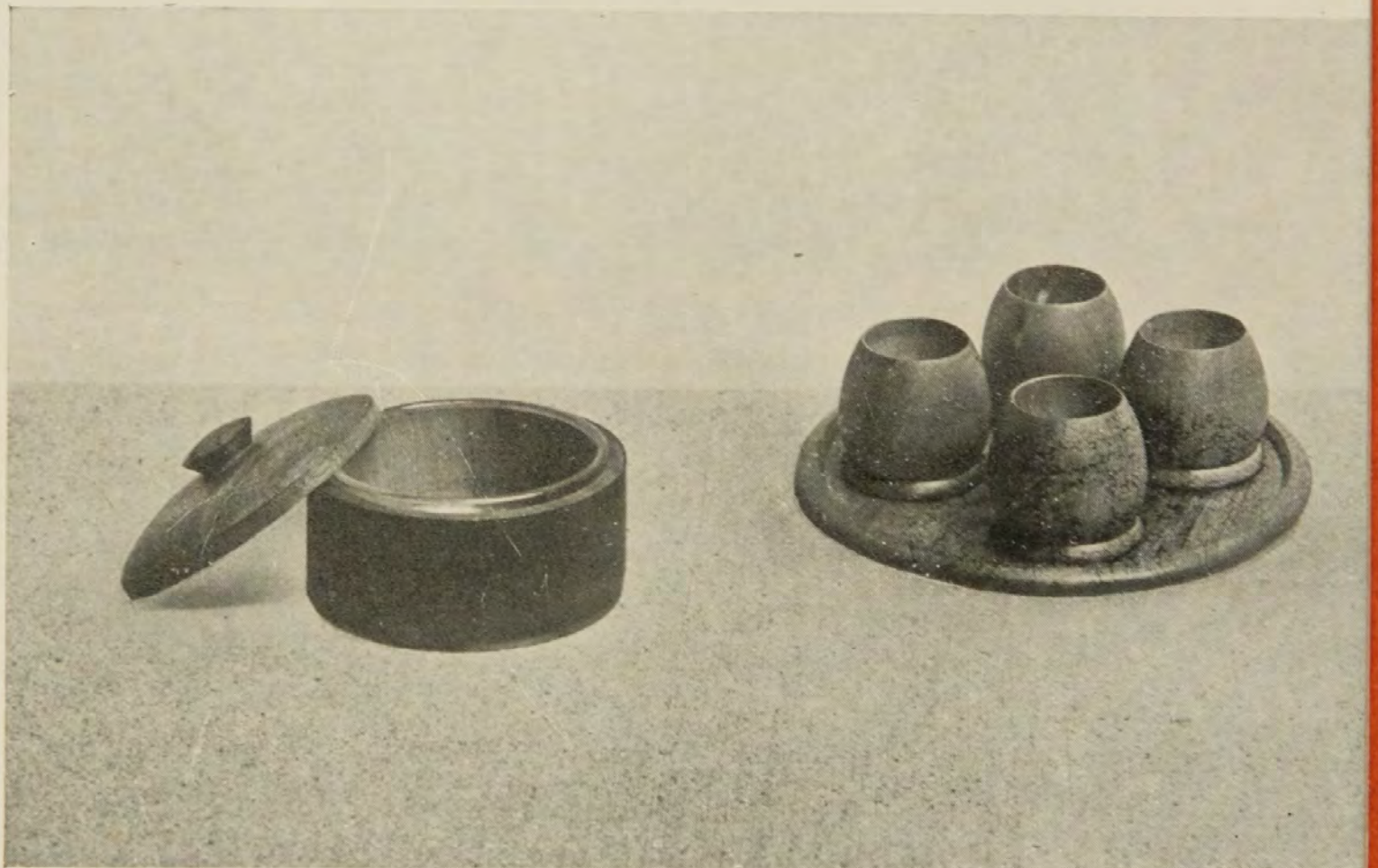
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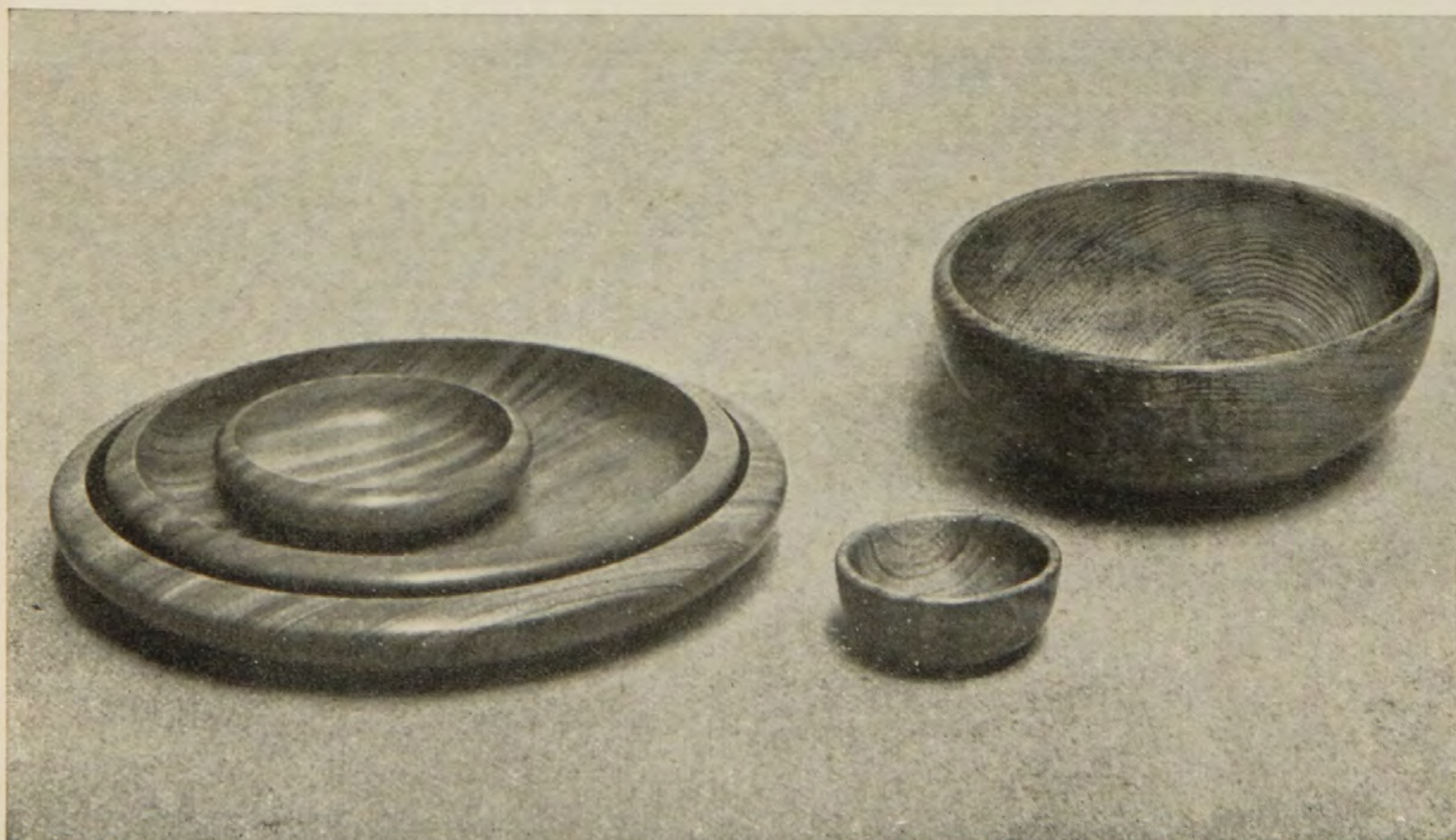


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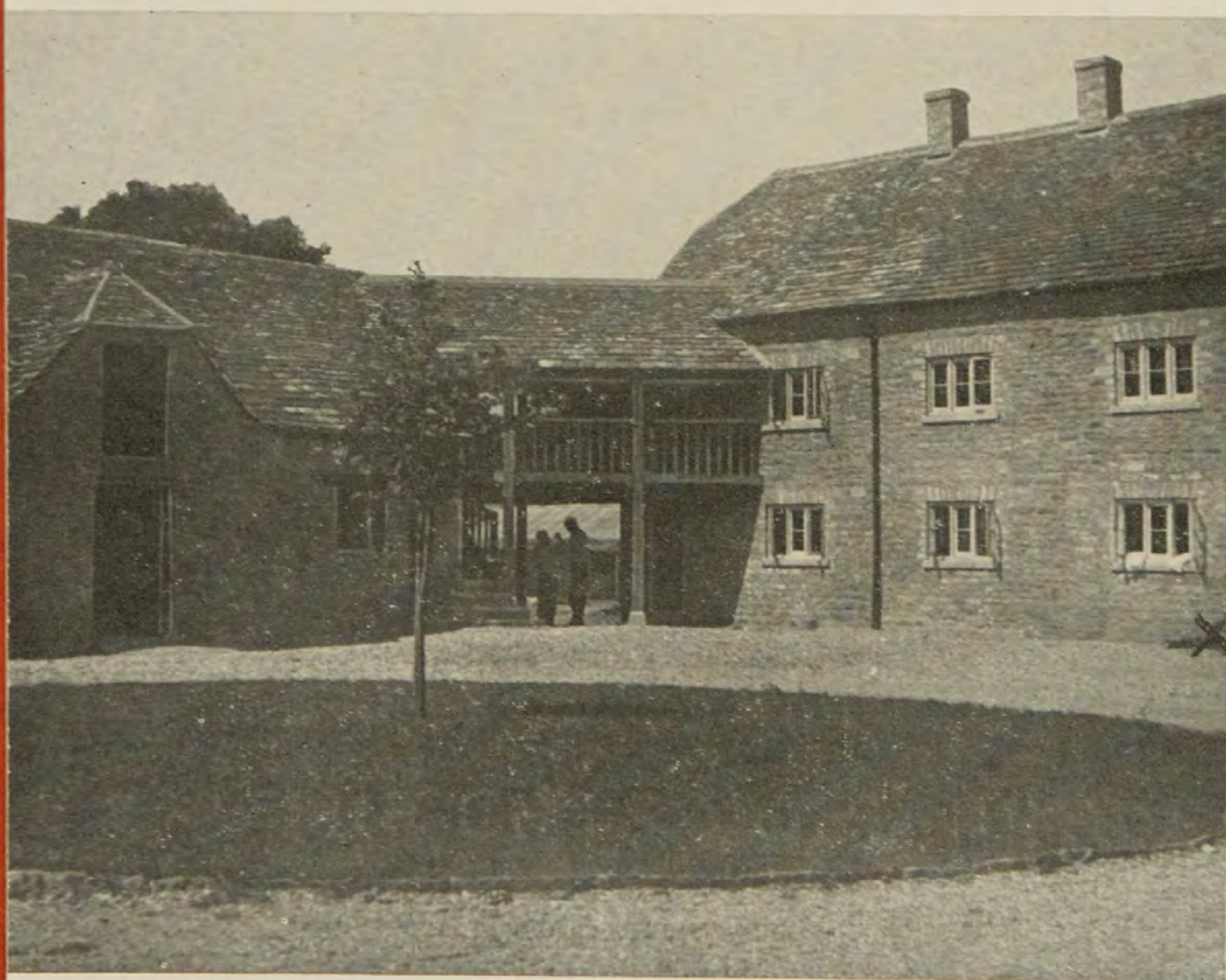


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we experienced afresh something of the wonder and triumph of the first Easter Day.

After breakfast, which like all meals at the Bruderhof was a sacrament in itself, we assembled outside the Kindergarten and followed the children as, decked with spring garlands, they made an exciting hunt for their Easter nests hidden in the garden. We went for a walk in the afternoon and had tea with one of the families.

The climax of Easter came in the evening. After the evening meal one of the leaders read to us from a book on the prophet Daniel, most of it concerned with the fiery furnace which Nebuchadnezzar prepared for the three loyal men. Then when it was dark the whole Brotherhood with all the guests, started in procession from the dining hall singing stirring hymns and marching songs in which the fire metaphor was constantly emphasized. Just as we entered a huge field, a tremendous tongue of flame shot up from a great wood fire, and forming a mighty circle with arms outstretched we gazed in silence at the bright flames, the sparks vanishing into the starry heavens above. Then a man's clear voice broke the stillness, saying: "This fire is a symbol for us of the Coming Order of Love and Justice. The fire is God's Love which must utterly destroy the old order of things, self-seeking, greed, competition and war, to make way for the new order of Brotherhood upon the earth. We challenge you and we challenge ourselves to open our hearts to *this fire*." When these words were uttered we knew that we too were committed to a full life of practical brotherhood with Christ and with each other. After singing again with hands joined in an enormous ring round the glowing fire, we again formed a procession and returned to the Hof—and to bed.

Monday was a holiday during which many of the members went for long cycle trips or walks into the Cotswolds. In the evening a few of the men took their violins and pipes and we sang and danced together. We went back to Birmingham in high spirits, for we knew that Easter 1938, had shown us that from our first steps together in Birmingham six months ago we should be led onward to that fuller life which God offers to all men through Christ.

“I was an hungred, a stranger, sick
and ye —”?

In spite of the boom now prevailing in world trade, there are still a growing number of people living in great need and lacking the bare necessities of life. The two main reasons for the suffering of men in our present time are the political situation, which has led to dictatorships in many European countries and inflicted severe hardship on

those who cannot conform, and the economic injustices of the capitalist system.

The Cotswold Bruderhof is constantly being approached to help people who, for one or other of these reasons, are deprived of their livelihood. It must be stated most emphatically that it is a sign of the great wrongness of modern organized church religion that such people cannot be helped adequately through the ordinary channels. It is remarkable that a group which itself largely consists of refugees who during the last twelve months have lost everything because of their belief, a group of poor and simple-living men and women which has to maintain nearly one hundred children, should be asked even by famous charitable organizations in England, to help destitute people without being offered any contribution towards their maintenance.

The Cotswold Bruderhof finds it extremely difficult to grant assistance in such cases, for the community is already struggling hard for economic independence, which is essential both as a matter of principle and in order to get an extension of the permit for the refugee members. On the other hand, the Bruderhof feels very strongly about the social and economic need of man, and especially for those who are suffering because their convictions differ from the ideas prevalent under dictatorships. The members of the community would very much like to help all those who come to them in need, and feel that such help is part of their Christian life.

But this cannot be done unless the economic basis of the community can be considerably extended. Accommodation is still desperately inadequate, and the local authorities are pressing hard for the extension of dwelling facilities for those people already resident at the community. It is absolutely necessary that a great deal more building work should be done in any case, and much more must be done if these crying needs are to be met; but for this there is no money available. Further, the different branches of work, on the farming side, the garden, the workshops, etc., need to be developed in order to increase production, so that those already living at the Bruderhof and more needy people may find their living here.

To take a few cases of people who have asked for help during the past few weeks: a British subject, a man of thirty-six years of age, with his little boy of six, had to leave Spain owing to the civil war. He is a commercial traveller, and has been looking for a livelihood in England for the past nine months in vain, owing mainly to the fact that, although he is a British subject, he knows hardly any English. A charity organization wrote on behalf of him. They offered no contribution towards his keep, but at the same time warned us about his delicate health and that he was not used to any manual work.

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the Bruderhof one day, requesting the community to take their five-year old boy into its care, and to give him a good education, so that "he should learn to love his fellow-men", as the father said. Owing to their poverty they could only offer ten shillings per month, which is, of course, wholly inadequate to keep and educate a child.

Two friends, both in comfortable positions, have each approached the Bruderhof for help for others. In the first case for an elderly German refugee married couple, who live in great distress somewhere in London and are practically starving. They speak no English and there is no hope of their finding a paid job. In the second case for another German refugee family, father, mother and five children, who are absolutely stranded and do not know where to turn.

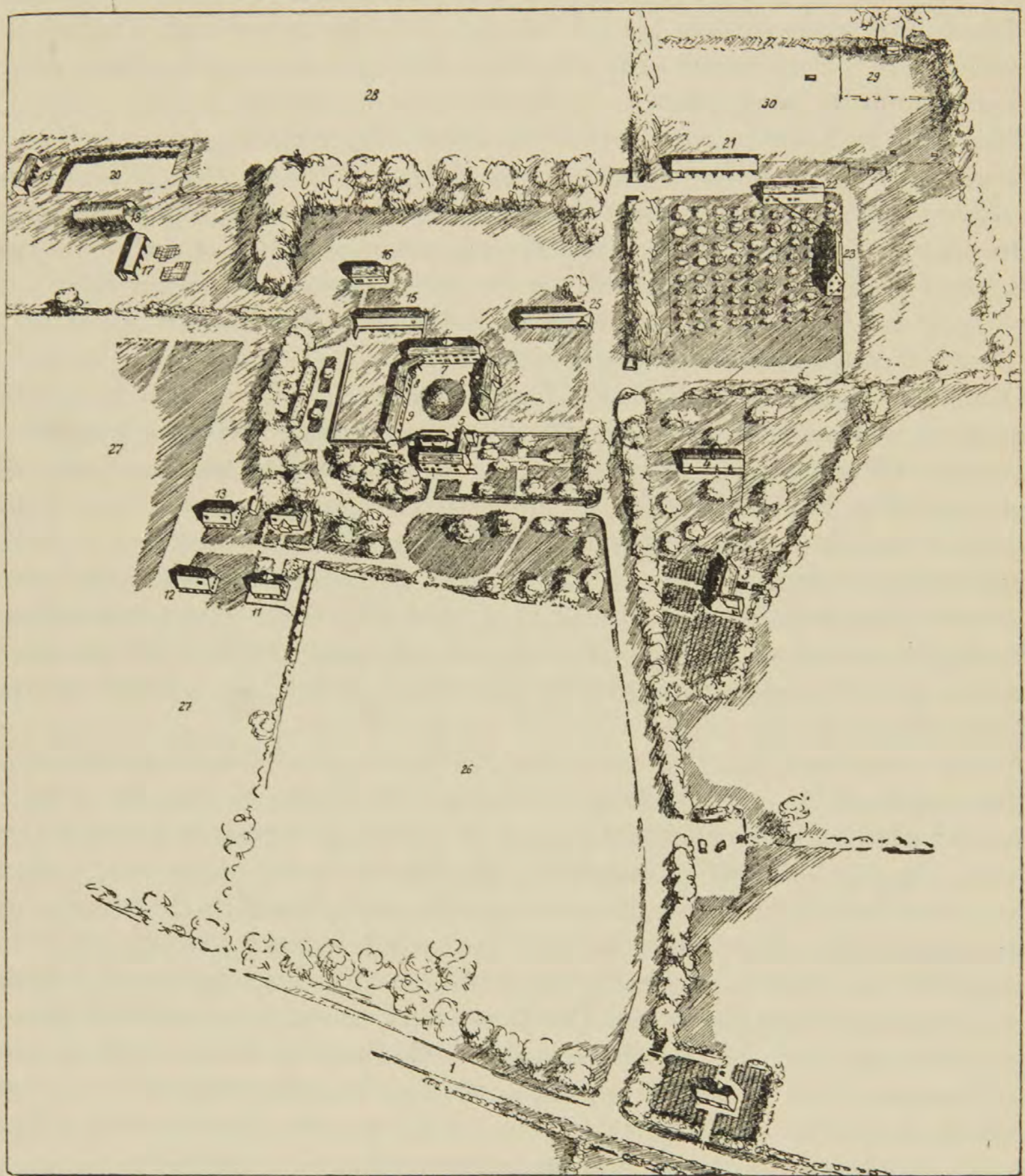
Other cases are that of a boy of seventeen years, an epileptic, whose mother wishes him to enjoy the healthy country life in community; another elderly man, also an epileptic, who cannot find work anywhere; an Austrian boy, refugee, also epileptic; a crippled young man who cannot earn his living and is a burden upon the resources of his poor parents; and many others. In all these instances friends who have heard about the Cotswold Bruderhof, and who themselves maintain a far higher standard of living than the members of the Bruderhof, have approached the community for help for these people, or advised somebody else to do so.

At the same time letters come to the Bruderhof from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Holland, Bulgaria, etc., from those who either want to leave their country because they find it impossible to stay, or have already left and cannot find a livelihood in the place where they now are. In one or two of the cases mentioned, as well as in others, the community has been able to help, but what it has been able to do is very little compared with the amount of suffering and need which comes daily before its notice. The Bruderhof therefore appeals to those friends who read this article to assist to the best of their ability in the extension of its work, firstly that economic independence may be achieved, and secondly that the community may be able to assist other poor and destitute people who are constantly asking for help.

It will be recalled that the members of the Cotswold Bruderhof have, in obedience to Christ and his commands, given up all their private property, and have put their strength, their gifts and their talents at the disposal of the community. They would be very grateful indeed if those who still cannot see their way to such a radical step should feel able to help with some of their material possessions the furtherance of this Christian witness, which has as its sole object the propagation and promotion of peace and justice among men, on the basis of love.

E. C. H. ARNOLD.

Plan of the Cotswold Bruderhof



Description.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Road to Ashton Keynes. | 12. and 13. School. | 22. Laundry, sewing, spinning and weaving rooms, small power station. |
| 2. and 3. Cottages. | 14. Railway carriages used as dwelling rooms. | 23. Printing, bookbinding and publishing house, office. |
| 4. Dining-room. | 15. Poultry-brooding house and run. | 24. Orchard. |
| 5. Dwelling house and communal kitchen. | 16. Hospital. | 25. Open shed. |
| 6. Stone barn. | 17. Shed for making concrete blocks. | 26. Arable land. |
| 7. Former byre, now rebuilt as dwelling house. | 18. Dutch barn. | 27. Garden. |
| 8. Former stable, now dwelling house. | 19. Stable. | 28. Pasture land. |
| 9. Turning shop. | 20. Gravel pit. | 29. Bee garden. |
| 10. Baby house. | 21. Smithy, carpenter's shop, cart shed. | 30. Chicken meadow. |
| 11. Kindergarten. | | |

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FORUM

LETTER FROM A SWISS QUAKER

Dear Friend—At one of the meetings of our professional association, I heard Professor B— give a lecture on “The End of the Christian Era.” His conclusion was as follows:—The end, not of Christianity but of the Christian era, is that moment in which the Christian churches, in the first place, cease to influence the state and civilization. Then there will no longer be a national church into which a child is born, but adult baptism. The course of events is driving Christians into a persecuted community or church, into the original Christian Church.

Many of my colleagues grew quite dizzy at such uncertainty. For the first time the sure ground of official Christianity was cut from beneath their feet. “If it must come to this, now, when after twenty-five years’ work we are about to receive a pension, who knows if we shall still find the power to be true to our confession?” That evening I thought: “If the course of events must really run in this direction, namely that the world simply casts off Christian influence and persecutes it, the thing to do is to take the leap here and now, and in one place at least to realise Christianity in deed in as pure a form as is possible to us human beings. As I see it, you are going this way. But for me this is only *one* way. The knowledge that we must not allow ourselves to be bound by such predictions held me back from taking the leap.

My goal is the same as yours: Jesus Christ and his Kingdom. Though seen very imperfectly, I must confess that nothing else is able to give content to my life and that it is my will to give my life for nothing else. Only, the way was and is different from yours. In spite of everything, I have not yet given up faith in a theocracy. This, looked at ultimately, is the faith of a Quaker. Each Quaker remains so long in the state, in whatever form it may take, as the state does not coerce his conscience. We even know a Quaker who was a member of the government, and on different occasions simply laid down his office when he felt he had to obey God rather than men. But each time he took it up again when requested. Thus the mustard seeds spread in the world. My mission compels me, if I may so express it, to remain in the world. I know well the imperfection which I am taking upon myself in so doing. I often suffer very much under it; in the depths, my own will urges me more to the absolute. But just for this reason I must hold out where I must suffer. The way often becomes unbearably hard. World events often drive one into a state of unfathomable loneliness.

Since the events in Austria, our land is courted on all sides in a way which we have never before experienced. All parties and confessions have united to defend the country. “May God forgive us the sin of killing, if we should have to kill for a good cause.” In this Catholics and Barth theologians shake hands as brothers. This worm eats its way into our own ranks. If one does not dare to-day to “sacrifice the last drop of blood” for the fatherland, one is looked upon as mad. The visible fatherland means more to the Christian in his decision than the ‘heavenly home’, just as his own patch of earth means more to the Socialist than the commonwealth of nations. Who then remains firm in absolute refusal of military service? Truly, only individual Quakers (no longer all), and the famous line of heretics, in which I place you. I myself remain a heretic. I have no other choice. But I should like to remain where I am placed until I am thrown out, that I might be absolutely certain I have followed my way to as near the end as possible, and not resigned from the struggle through weakness. You really went the same way, as a community, in Germany. My spiritual home is with you. Perhaps you find it presumptuous if I regard myself meanwhile as an ‘outpost’ of the Bruderhof? Contemporary events can also drive us together physically, but many of my friends and I myself would prefer to let ourselves be put out. The main thing is to be ready, not to do one’s own will, not to want to hold

to one's own goods, but to have the courage to enter a position of complete human insecurity as soon as God demands this of us.

The battle is hard, yet we find a rich joy in it. All testing should only strengthen our faith. We bear within us the certainty that God never forsakes us, yes, even in outward defeat, he holds us in his strong hand. If we go under, we go under in him. Are we not all the most happy people, we, who have been permitted to know this strong rock? Those who appear so great to-day, those who must hang on so grimly to everything visible, will themselves tremble and fear in great need and distress. We must remain with them in sincere, loving pity and pray for them. To do this we must take to heart the story of Peter—that it is only the grace of God that makes it possible for us to be true unto death. During Easter I had to think again and again of his denial and of the sleeping disciples in Gethsemane. What terrific loneliness for Christ! But we also must learn to taste it in the same degree. Close friends are already changing their attitude from week to week. Of fourteen friends who met at the last meeting of our No More War Group, I was the only one who, as they expressed it, stood for the attitude of the Sermon on the Mount. The whole earth is moved. Walls are collapsing. And yet I believe it can all be in preparation for the Revolution of Christ in the world.

Still other dear and courageous friends write to me, "Ultimately there remains nothing else for us but the Bruderhof way." I can imagine that this decision must appear to you as though you were just good enough, as a last resort, to receive all these fugitives. I even catch myself thinking that, although as one driven from one's work I could only find a home with you, my pride would forbid me to come to you like that if I had not already taken the step. But I know that no humiliation could hold me back from this, and should you not want to have an open door for us, we would have to take even this last homelessness upon us, and perhaps make a spiritual home for ourselves. Forgive me my frank words, but this has been worrying me for some time, and for that reason I am confiding it to you.

Hoping to see you again, I send my greetings to all my Swiss friends and the Bruderhof families whom I do not yet know. I am closely bound with you all in thoughts and in love.

C. G.

ONE WAY—OR TWO WAYS?

Dear Friend, — I am very glad to see your first issue, and warmly welcome its general outlook. May it have a long and useful career!

Very inspiring is the story given of how the idea of Christian Community has been kept alive and resurrected from time to time by the faithfulness of its adherents in the face of very adverse circumstances. We are far too apt to give up—throwing the blame on to 'the system' or other untoward conditions. But we have also something to say as to the causation of these untoward conditions. As citizens are we not members also of that larger community—the city—the state—the world? As those who eat and drink, are we not involved in the economic system? If any action—or apathy—on our part has helped to make the world what it is, are we not, to that extent, responsible for placing these difficulties in the path of those who desire to live after a better pattern? In the history of the Hutterian Communities we watch them moving from place to place—from one European country to another—then to the U.S.A.—finally to Canada and England. Apparently there are now very few countries in which there remains the necessary degree of freedom. And, to the pacifist, how long is that freedom likely to continue—even in British countries?

Yes, we must work in both directions. To each his allotted task. Some in the direct Bruderhof way, some in other voluntary movements, some in the whirlpool of politics—endeavouring to make our economic system a little more appropriate to the truly communal way of life. But, in spite of this slight amount of specialization, we must remain comrades.

277, Southend Road, Stanford-le-Hope.

THOMAS DENT.

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THE JEWS IN VIENNA, CAN THEIR SUFFERING BE AVERTED?

Dear Editor,—I spent the first half of April at the Vienna Quaker Centre, and gladly respond to your invitation to write a few lines about my impressions.

I have never before been confronted with so vast a problem of human suffering as that which exists among the Jews and 'Non-Aryans' who form a large fraction, perhaps a quarter, of the city's population. One and all they have been reduced by a stroke of the pen—the introduction after the *Anschluss* of the German anti-Jewish legislation into Austria—to the status of pariahs. Day by day I spoke to intellectuals, artists, professional men and tradespeople whose prospects of earning a livelihood had been reduced to nothing. Even those who might eke out a living by "taking in each other's washing" in the new-style Ghetto in which German Jews must henceforward live—and these are probably in a minority—dread the future for their children's sake, and eagerly enquire whether there is any corner of the earth which will receive them as settlers.

I came home convinced that no efforts of private organizations can do more than touch the fringe of this problem. Nothing short of action by governments and actual large scale land settlement can avail to lay a fresh foundation for these shattered existences. Such action alone can prevent a steady increase of the already vast mental agony which grips these people, many of them the very essence of Viennese charm and culture, and often drives them to suicide. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Is it foolish to hope that these people will not appeal in vain to the conscience of England and the world, and that governments will relax the present rigorous restrictions as to their admission and concert measures for their settlement?—Your friend sincerely,

The University, Birmingham.

JOHN STURGE STEPHENS.

SEEKING FOR COMMUNITY

Dear Friend,—Thank you so much for sending me a copy of "The Plough", I shall be much interested to read it. I am particularly interested in Leslie Stubbings' article on Community Service. I should very much like to have more details of the various communities in existence, as I feel sometimes that to join one is the only solution to the working out of one's religious principles. To me the great remedy exists in the building up of a man from the inside. We must build on a religious foundation. A few of the outward signs of such would be exhibited in purity of living, e.g. vegetarianism, and the strict control of the type of literature read and the pooling of one's possessions so that no inequality of opportunity or privileges should occur. If you can suggest any Community, the life of which is based upon these principles, I should be grateful to know about it. Perhaps yours is.

This is a very inadequate expression of my feelings, but I do feel that an effective religion should be one where the mystic element is stressed. Aren't we far too inclined to make religion too personal, outward and concrete, and thus it becomes materialistic, *unreal*, and we have an inability to keep in touch with the All Holy Being and, seeing the vision of His Will, to draw upon an unquenchable fount of spirituality which would control our actions and keep our being steadfast and whole. Is not this the reason for much of the evil going on in the world to-day? Hoping very much that you may be able to help me in this matter.—With many kind thoughts,

Muerra Club, London, W.C.1.

VICTORIA LEVESON GOWER.

AN APPRECIATION OF "THE PLOUGH."

Dear Friend,—My wife and I recently received an unexpected visit from Bro' B—S—, and while I have a little enforced leisure, would ask you kindly to repeat to him the pleasure we had in his company, and particularly the joy, but heart-searching, we have since had on reading the copy of "The Plough", which he left with us.

I note particularly that though, one day, the Sword is to be beaten into the Ploughshare, you have turned your Ploughshare into a Sword. Your artist in drawing his diagram has shown a dual action of the Plough: it pierces, and it divides. I am reminded that those are the functions of the Word of God. (Heb. iv, 12).

Mr. Murry's challenge is relentless. Again I am reminded that Jesus Christ said that He had not come to bring peace on Earth (He, the Prince of Peace!), but a Sword; and He has been dividing individuals and families ever since.

Again, your artist's drawing of the Plough, at the intersection of its blade with the Earth, shows as a *point*. All I can say is that on the first glance through this first Number, minds will be brought to 'Attention', and hearts receive a little stab. On a second reading, readers will get it deeper.—Yours sincerely,

41, Clarence Square, Cheltenham.

E. H. WYNN.

Community Notes and News

CONTRIBUTED BY THE COMMUNITY SERVICE COMMITTEE

The March notes proved the practical usefulness of this page. Our contact index now numbers over 600 names—if yours isn't included, may we have it? Please post with enquiries to address given in final paragraph below.

Many who heard Mary Osborn's talk on the "Way of Community" at the Youth Conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation have since visited the Community of the Way—a practical experiment in living, working and sharing amongst unemployed families in Bow.

Mary Osborn has also been talking to groups at Pinner, Highgate, Bedford and in Central London. If your group is ready to give an evening to the consideration of Community, please get in touch with us.

Wessex friends interested in community life and work please get in touch with Sisley Tanner, "The Cottage," Lyncombe Vale, Bath.

"Believing that a life in Camberwell can never be more than half a life," St. Hilda's is planning a country colony as near London as open land can be found. Rev. George Gibson writes, "The idea is to establish a permanent group, engaged in farming, craft-work and domestic work; and to throw open the house for holiday-makers, and one of the fields for campers, from the congested area around the Mission. Faith makes us bold to believe that the community spirit we are trying to foster will unite us thus in a wider and fuller life." A small but vigorous monthly magazine "Church & Community," is now published by St. Hilda's.

A Christian group plans to start a Community House in Cambridge, pooling incomes and adopting simple standards of life. They aim to develop a settlement, guest house and rescue home and to produce fruit, vegetables and eggs on adjoining land. Co-operation welcomed.

A friend at Sheringham invites one or two pacifists to join her in starting a peace bookshop on an income pooling basis; her own house could be used as a communal home, but the shop would have to be rented.

Edmund Cocksedge, now in Palestine studying the Communal Settlements, hopes to return home in July and wants to hear from all who would be ready to co-operate in a similar experiment in this country.

Land and housing for community production are available at Sandon.

A spacious farmhouse, outbuildings and land near Horsham (Sussex) to let, preferably for a community or social service centre. Owner runs holiday home in Franciscan tradition on adjoining site.

A small group of those interested in Community at Weston-super-Mare will be glad to hear from others in or around this area.

Colchester P.P.U. Group are holding a Peace Exhibition at which a special section will be devoted to Community principles and practice.

A friend in London would be ready to co-operate with others in producing portable greenhouses as a community sales-line.

'Adopting' unemployed families and lonely individuals through the post is a practical form of community sharing. Co-operation invited.

The Joint Report of the Bath and Bow Conferences to be published in autumn will provide a comprehensive survey of Community in Britain. Those interested will be notified as soon as it is available.

A series of pamphlets is in preparation by the Christian Social Council on "Community and its Basis in Christian Teaching." "Cell Groups for Christian Social Action" (Rev. Gibson) has already been issued.

An account of the Ashram Communities in India has been received from Muriel Frost who lives in community at Vidivelli (Christian) Ashram in South India. "Collective Adventure", a book by Maurice Pearlman on the Communal Settlements in Palestine will be on sale shortly. "The Challenge of the East" (Hogg, S.P.C.K.) contains the description of a successful community experiment in Japan.

A Community 'reading list' and a brief survey of community experiments in Britain have been prepared by the Community Service Committee. Copies free, but contributions towards costs welcomed.

All requests, enquiries and communications please to: Hon. Sec. Community Service Committee, "Chancton", Dartnell Park, West Byfleet, Surrey. Stamps will be welcome where a reply is indicated.

Notes, Comments and Announcements

The present number of THE PLOUGH, like the first one, is being sent to a large number of friends. We shall be grateful if those who have not yet subscribed will do so, and if those who have already contributed would try to get one other regular subscriber. Further, we should be very glad if those who cannot see their way to taking THE PLOUGH regularly would be kind enough to pay for the first two numbers received at the subscription rate, that is, 2/6 instead of 3/-. Articles and other contributions for our next issue are invited, especially for the "Forum" section. We are glad to announce that John Middleton Murry will contribute an article for the autumn number. All payments, articles, contributions, suggestions and criticisms should be addressed to The Editor, "The Plough", The Cotswold Bruderhof, Ashton Keynes, Wilts.

We are sure that the article by the late Dr. Eberhard Arnold, "The Individual and World Need," will interest our readers. It has been translated by Kathleen E. Hamilton, M.A., a member of the Cotswold Bruderhof, who also translated Eberhard Arnold's articles "The Mystery of the Early Church" and "St. Francis and Love" in the first number, and all the other contributions in German. We would like to suggest in this connection that discussion groups might be formed in various cities where the more fundamental articles contained in THE PLOUGH could be discussed. All those interested in this scheme should write to the Editor, who will try to bring those who live in the same district into touch with each other.

The extract from a paper called "The Holy Nation", written by a friend in 1924, shows clearly that the idea of a practical, communal way of life on the basis of Christ's teaching is not a new one in this country. It is this vision in its essentials, though not in its details, which the Cotswold Bruderhof is trying to realise.

The Coming Order, as we see it, must "change the whole fabric of life in all its spheres and contexts" (THE PLOUGH, Vol. 1, p. 1). Georg Barth's article on "Work and Handicraft in the Spiritual Culture of the Church", on page 57, applies this principle to one particular but very important sphere of life. The Cotswold Bruderhof is trying to revive beautiful handicrafts, some samples of which can be seen in the illustrations facing page 60. So far workshops for wood-turning, carpentry, printing and bookbinding have been started. Anyone who is interested in the products of these branches of work should write to the Secretary of the Cotswold Bruderhof.

We hope that the request for help in our article on page 61 will meet with a generous response. In this connection we should like to say that the Cotswold Bruderhof has proposals which will enable friends who are sympathetic, but find it impossible to make a gift, to invest their money in a company which is being formed to provide more capital for the work of the Bruderhof. Particulars of this may be obtained from the Treasurer, to whom also cheques and contributions should be made payable.

In his article "In England Now" (THE PLOUGH, Vol. 1, p. 12), Leslie Stubbings mentions a community group which has grown out of a church in Birmingham. We are publishing in this issue a brief account of the group's visit to the Cotswold Bruderhof at Easter. This group is now fully united with the Cotswold Bruderhof, which is now in charge of 11, Handsworth New Road, Winson Green, Birmingham. The house is called "The Bruderhof House", and will continue to be used in the service of the Coming Order, primarily as a meeting place of all those interested in a Christian community life in the Birmingham area. We suggest it may be used as a centre for one or more of the discussion groups referred to above.

We are glad to be able to open the FORUM section of THE PLOUGH with some very interesting letters. That of the Swiss Quaker will give English friends some idea of the very difficult position of serious-minded Christians abroad. It can be seen clearly that a decision one

way or the other will have to be made soon. The question is whether we can still work and be actively engaged in a wrong order of life, or whether we should not 'go out of Babel' and build the City on the Hill. Those who live at the Cotswold Bruderhof are sure where the right answer to this lies: in a practical life-witness of peace, justice and brotherhood.

There will be a camp of the Subsistence Production Society at Brynmawr from July 11th till September 17th, 1938. Anyone who is interested in this work carried on by An Order of friends should write to Jim Forester, Woodlands, Cwmavon, Varteg, near Pontypool, Monmouthshire. Another camp for the unemployed is being organised by the Grith Fryd Camp at Bickerton for six weeks beginning July 18th and ending August 7th. All communications about this camp should be addressed to W. J. Varley, M.A., University Settlement, Nile Street, Liverpool, 1.

The Cotswold Bruderhof would also be glad if those who are interested in a Christian community life would help with the great amount of development work which has still to be done. A road and several dwelling houses and farm buildings have to be built this summer and extensive ditches have to be excavated for the laying of water and sewage pipes. The work will commence about July 20th. All who would like to help are heartily invited to do so. Women workers for kitchen and household work and for harvesting will also be very welcome. A friend has offered to help unemployed men who wish to come to the Bruderhof out of a deep interest in its life, but who cannot afford the fare or who are hindered economically in other ways. Full particulars can be obtained from the Secretary, The Cotswold Bruderhof, Ashton Keynes, Wilts.

The next issue of THE PLOUGH will be published during September.
THE EDITOR.

Bookbinding

Good hand-bookbinding is now a rarity, as all lovers of beautifully bound books know. Machinery has practically stamped out the craft of binding by hand in England, and in doing so has robbed the public of something of real cultural value.

The Cotswold Bruderhof is fortunate in having among its members bookbinders whose work expresses the craftsman's joy in creating a thing of beauty. All kinds of bookbinding can be undertaken by them—from magazines to full leather and vellum bindings. Their work is especially in demand for bringing new life to old books. Valuable old editions are handled with feeling and care, and bound in a style appropriate to the period at which they were printed.

The bookbinding shop of the Cotswold Bruderhof will gladly supply any information desired, and welcome orders for binding books.

Books

PRAYER AND THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION by J. S. Hoyland.
Student Christian Movement Press, London, 1938. Price 3s. 6d.

WAR AND THE CHRISTIAN by C. E. Raven, D.D.
Student Christian Movement Press, London, 1938. Price 5s.

Prayer and the Social Revolution by J. S. Hoyland shows, clause by clause, how the Lord's Prayer is identified with a new order of justice and love, embracing the whole of humanity. This order is God's will, and prayer is the handing over of one's own will to him, that, through it, his love might have free expression. This alone can combat the avarice and will to power which are the roots of poverty and war. J. S. Hoyland defines God's will as "the selfless and unstinting service of the poor and needy", and says prayer is nothing if it is not practical. But can one be content, as he suggests, to help the poor in holidays, in work camp teams or by giving them the produce of our allotments? Is the doing of God's will only for our spare time? Is the building of the new order not something great enough to demand *absolute* devotion?

C. E. Raven's book, *War and the Christian*, comes as an appalling revelation of conditions within the world churches to-day. The author urges the militarist and pacifist elements within them to mutual understanding and fellowship in considering the question of war, seeing this issue as leading back to the source of the Christian Faith. Then he proceeds to view the question from the standpoint of varying degrees of human agreement and disagreement. The effect is to make everything relative. If this welter of intellectual theories and moral conceptions were a necessary step to discipleship of Christ, what would have become of a man like Peter? What is wanted is not friendly discussion, a trying to see the good in both sides resulting in making black and white an indeterminate grey. Nor is it, on this basis, a seeking of the mind of Christ. What is necessary is that we, turning in loathing from our own selves and our interpretations of his mind—coloured as they are by our own social and economic interests and prestige—in abject humility, obey his command and follow him on the way of unconditional love. Then we shall find ourselves utterly at one, and in this unity it shall be clearly seen that war with his fellow-men has no place and never can have a place in the life of a Christian.

We have pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of *The New Vision of Man* by F. S. Marvin (*George Allen and Unwin, 5s. net*); *Drei Predigten* by Karl Barth (*Reinhardt, Basel, Fr. 1.25*) and *Die kommende Kirche* by Walter Lüthi (*Reinhardt, Basel, Fr. 2.50 and Fr. 4.-*)

KATHLEEN E. HAMILTON.

The Christian Challenge to Christians

by KENNETH INGRAM. "Here is a book for which to be grateful . . . this is a powerful and convincing plea for a Left Orientation of Christianity" — *Tribune*. 6s. net

Christianity—Right or Left?

by KENNETH INGRAM. "Sympathisers with the Right as well as those on the Left should be grateful for the clarification of the position from the Christian standpoint which Mr. Ingram presents" — *Inquirer*. 6s. net

The Religion of the Good Life

by R. P. MASANI. An exposition of the fundamental principles of the faith preached by Zoroaster and his followers. The author shows how the religion has survived the ages, and how it is still being practised by the present day Parsis. 6s. net

Democratic Leadership

by A. BARRATT BROWN. "No mere setting forth of theories, but of conclusions stated with force that clearly springs from intense conviction that the hope of the world is in democracy properly led and responsively followed" — *Baptist Times*. Cloth, 2s. 6d. net, Paper, 1s. 6d. net

Liberality and Civilization

by GILBERT MURRAY. "Dr. Murray's lectures have the most practical application to the world to-day; and there are few civilized men who would disagree with his ideals" — *Spectator*. 2s. 6d. net

GEORGE ALLEN AND UNWIN

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