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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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Our Responsibility for the Nation and for Humanity

The mission of the Church is identity with the life of Jesus, even unto his cross. It is unification with the life of the Risen One, with his Spirit. It is of one character with the future Kingdom of God. From this arises the task of the Church for the nation and humanity. Jesus comprehended humanity in all nations; he sent those who were his to all nations; he affirmed his people first, but he loved the peoples of the whole of humanity. The Kingdom of God which he proclaimed with the words of the prophet John, was meant as the prophets meant it: fruitfulness of the earth and land, the building anew of culture, social justice, prophetic theocracy, the Kingdom of the Messiah, an international Kingdom of Peace, community with God and community of faith and love: for what mattered was God alone, that his will of love should break through on this earth.

Jesus saw the earth as a whole, he looked upon humanity as a whole and he saw his life-struggle as war against the prince of this world, against the spirit of the earth, against the god of this epoch, against the spirit of this world, against Satan. He exposed this spirit in its fourfold, original character: firstly as Mammon, secondly as liar, thirdly as murderer, fourthly as impure.

When believing circles to-day talk so much of sin and recognition of sins and forgiveness of sins, they ought to grasp this fourfold root of sin in its real nature. It is the covetous will, the will to power and might, in contrast to the will of love, which gives freely. The Church is called to carry on the same determined warfare against this spirit of power as Jesus waged. Through the Spirit of Christ she has received the same hope and expectation as was given to the Early Church. The Spirit reminds her of all the things that Jesus said, and shows her things to come.

This Spirit is the surety of the nature of the coming Kingdom of God. It is the seal, the first-fruits of the future inheritance. Therefore this Spirit bears in itself the character of the future Kingdom, those characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom which Jesus has revealed in the Sermon on the Mount: neediness and poverty, thirst for justice, the work for peace, unconditional love and unconditional resolution, organic life and unfolding of energy, a bringing forth of the fruit of divine strength. This unconditional character of the Spirit of love means a fight unto blood and unto death. It means tearing out the eye, cutting off the hand. It means selling all things, giving everything to the poor, the hating and leaving of fatherland and family, yes, and one's own life, for the sake of the Kingdom of God; the giving up of all other pearls for the one pearl, to win the coming Kingdom; the employing of all other talents for the returning King, who will win his Kingdom on this earth.

This means taking up a resolute attitude of war against all things as they are, because wherever state and society confront us we find the contradiction of unconditional love, the contradiction of the Kingdom of God. Responsibility for the nation and fatherland to which one belongs shows the Church a clear way. She serves the nations in the deepest way in holding before their eyes the clear mirror of the coming Kingdom. As the sacrosanct embassy of another world power, the future empire of the Messiah-King, she must stand in opposition to the present world order. She is called to make a flaming protest against the state — in so far as it recognizes and regulates public impurity, as for example in prostitution; or in so far as it organizes public murder, as for example in war.

She stands in unbroken, holy protest against the economic social order in so far as this secures financial privileges for certain classes, and openly robs other classes of the most obvious necessities for life. She stands in revolutionary protest against the system of Mammonism and capitalism. For she sees in this organization of gold a mechanized injustice, an incarnation of the devil as Mammon. She stands, therefore, in the same deadly hatred against the insincerity which divides society into strata in which knaves can be regarded as of the upper classes; in which through all manner of tasteless luxury, through the materialization of their relationships in terms of money, men despise and trample upon what is really human.

She is, therefore, also called to wage the sharpest warfare with the religious insincerity of the great systems of religion, which coat unchristian nations with an apparently Christian whitewash. The Church of Jesus is therefore not to be confused either with an individual church or with an individual sect, either with the church type as such or with the sect type as such. Her task and responsibility for the nation and humanity is as universal and as educative of the nations as the goal which the

church has set itself. At the same time her task is as radical and as revolutionizing of the nations as the sects see their task to be.

The universal character of the Church of Jesus is clearly declared in the expectation of the Kingdom of God. She can therefore discover everywhere traces and indications in embryo, pointing in one way or another to the coming Kingdom of God. Thus she knows that government is also an ordinance of God. She sees in the state a wild beast of hell, an offspring of evil, but she knows at the same time that this beast of prey is necessary to keep the balance between the hostile animal instincts, by means of murderous violence.

The Church recognizes everywhere in the structure of economic society the values of both leadership and work. She sees that human society, humanity, has been given something great by God, but is not as yet filled by one unifying Spirit, is not yet able to live as one unified collective soul. Therefore she understands the necessity of materializing human relationships in terms of money wherever spirit and soul are lacking, but she protests against the present condition of things, against the order as it is, as a satanic distortion of God's will for the nation and humanity. She recognizes the family as the sole right, and ever-new, organic realization of the will of love and of community life, that is, of the will of God. Of course in the married life of the usual marriage, which is only too often a marriage for money, a society marriage or a marriage for race breeding after the manner of breeding animals, she sees a satanic distortion of this organic fellowship of life. But where two people become one in God, in his Spirit, in his feeling of love, and illustrate in the symbol of marriage the unity of two which exists between Christ and his Church, there is the natural, organic, essential ingredient for nation and humanity, for the future Kingdom of God, for God's future on this earth. Here in the most natural way, without reflection or forced intention, the nature of the Kingdom of God comes to light as fellowship of love, fellowship of work, fellowship of having all things in common, fellowship of the table, fellowship with God, fellowship of life.

This family exists, in the deepest sense, only in Christ, in the daily forgiveness of his cross, in the strength of his redemption, in the daily overcoming of collective egotism, in daily devotion to all men, to one's own nation and to the whole of humanity. Family unions, community confederations which join in the stem Jesus to a communion of love, of devotion to the nation and humanity, are, in this sense, a testimony to Jesus, a radiating of the future Kingdom of God in this world. One can do no greater or stronger service to his fatherland than to dare to live out the unbroken will of love of Jesus, to keep himself from all litigation, to refrain from all violence and all harming of his neighbours, and to seek to lead a simple, genuine and pure life. It is not socialism

or pacifism as such, as though these solutions were of worth *in themselves*. It is something much deeper, it is the heart of God, as it is revealed in the cross of Christ. It is the application of the cross of Christ to all conditions of life, including political and economic life. It is the radiation of the future Kingdom of God into this present epoch. They may be only little sparks of light, they may be only single grains of salt, they may be only single houses set on a hill—but they are sparks of the coming fire, rays of the rising sun, messengers of the coming day. It is the same God who can only be named with his word: "I am, that I am". It is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and throughout all ages. In opposition to the present epoch, which is a world of hell, of the devil and of Satan, a world of Mammon, of untruthfulness, injustice and of murder, he must show the future epoch as living and present in himself: the epoch of peace, the epoch of justice, of love and of joy, the reign of God for which we pray, "Thy will be done on earth even as it is done in Heaven. Thy Kingdom come".

EBERHARD ARNOLD

The Moon Parable

The poet rowed across the lake;
The silver moon was shining full,
His bungling bow in pieces brake
Its picture in that silent pool.

The boat passed on its way the same,
But from its brief commotion
A host of little ripples came
The wavelets of a tiny ocean.

Yet each did in its bosom bear
Some pieces of that mirrored glory,
Till all were settled again with care
Like portions of some well-told story.

And so the burgeoning ways of man,
Who, shortsighted and so wilful,
Thinks in a brief hour to break God's plan,
But God is very skilful

Who plants the round moon as before
On the water's tranquil face,
So is not known where any flaw
Marred the reflection for a space.

ALAN CAVALIER

PAST AND PRESENT

The Church and the World

Claus Felbinger's Confession of Faith, addressed to the
Council of Landshut, 1560.

Dear Lords and Magistrates of this town of Landshut, God, who doeth naught without a cause, hath so disposed that our two brothers have been arrested for the sake of divine truth, and handed over to you as prisoners. Although we have been questioned twice already in Neumarkt by the Governor and his assistants, and several times here by the lords' men regarding our way of life, yet I feel in my heart that I have not fully disclosed my mind in such a way that ye might understand the foundation on which I stand.

It is therefore my earnest request that ye take the time and trouble to read this, our written confession, wherein ye may perceive how we live and on what foundation we stand and build. In it ye will see—if there be a divine spark within you—that we have done naught out of a hasty decision or without reason, although the blind world considereth us fools for acting as we do. We, however, know that God's Word cannot lie. If we build rightly thereon, and walk worthy of and in accordance with the same, then our heart suffereth no harm when, trusting and confiding in the Word of God, we allow not the children of darkness to drive us from it. For so one must enter, through Christ, through much pain, suffering, fear and need, the hard, rough, narrow, slippery way through the narrow gate, which but few find, but which Christ hath shown is the way to life, and hath himself gone before us.

Ye will now, however, find herein the main matters regarding which we are questioned, and the answers thereto, to which with God's help we hope to stand constant. This we shall confess as divine truth, because it is the truth, and we wish in this matter to wait upon the Lord. What he alloweth you to bring upon us must be to us, who love him from the heart, for the greatest good, for salvation and comfort—and for you, if ye change not your lives and repent truly, it must be for a hard testimony against you.

Dear authorities, firstly, as ye also are servants of God, though outside the perfection of Christ (namely, to take vengeance on evildoers, to punish the evil, and to protect and shelter the devout), God hath given the sword into your hand. He hath granted you such honour and dignity as is meet, that ye may be rightly obeyed in that which is not

against God. And we say to you: "He who withstandeth the authorities in just matters, withstandeth God's ordinance, for the authorities hold their office in order that disobedience might be punished." This is the reason, ye servants of God, that I wanted to remind and exhort you to consider your office—not that we were dismayed at having to suffer for what we have done for the sake of our confession. O, no! For we count not ourselves worthy or able or good enough to suffer anything for the sake of God's Word, but we praise God with all our hearts that in his providence he hath ordained that we, unworthy men, be true witnesses of his holy truth; which thing we have also vowed and promised him in the covenant of true Christian baptism, namely: where need be to lay down our life for his name; after having recognized the truth, never to act against God consciously and wilfully, in word or in deed, but with his help rather to suffer death than do so; to follow his holy Word unswervingly, and to adorn our faith with work pleasing to God. For he hath given us, who have believed his Word, grace and strength to do his divine will joyfully; which thing, however, was impossible to us until we had given ourselves utterly to him. God hath promised from the beginning that he would, in all things, make it possible for those who truly believe to do what he demandeth of them, and what is right in his eyes; for he would confirm their faith with the strength of his Holy Spirit, who would lead and guide them into all truth and strengthen their spirit, that they may know for certain that they are children of God and co-heirs with Christ, in so far as they suffer with him.

Therefore, dear authorities and servants of God, search us as ye will and ye shall find that we have not acted against God, or wronged any man, but have lived both here and in the country without harming any. The work of God, however, is amazing in the eyes of carnal men, for God's truth hath always been contrary and unbearable to the world, so that the very wisest in the world through their wisdom have not been able to recognize Christ, who hath been truth eternally. Therefore from the beginning he that is born of the Spirit hath had to be persecuted in all possible ways by the man born of the flesh, for they have been in every way contrary to one another. Christ himself saith of his amazing coming into the world that he was not come to send peace on earth, but discord and the sword, to divide men two against three and three against two, and they would find their greatest enemies among the members of their own household. That the Lord will bring to pass, for two will be working at one mill, and one will be taken and the other left; two will lie in one bed, and one will be taken and the other left. That is the greatest thing for which we, through the Word of God, can prepare the way, that God visiteth men with his word of grace, and gathereth and separateth those according to his holy will who reverence God's covenant.

Thus faith is not a matter of course. Some follow the teaching of Christ immediately. Others regard it as seduction: for those who do not receive the teaching from above, revealed by the Father himself, cannot grasp it, and we cannot help them. We would have liked all men to understand and recognize what pertaineth to their salvation, and to repent now, in the time of grace, while it is still 'to-day'; since God's wrath hangs over the heads of sinners and the unrepentant, and will turn all the godless to hell. For the unrighteous will never inherit God's Kingdom, but only those who have cleansed their souls through obedience to truth, and patiently with good works seek eternal life.

We have been asked by sundry why we have come into the Prince's land, and draw the people away. My answer is, we go not into this land only, but into all lands, wherever our language is known, for where God openeth a door for us and showeth us zealous hearts that truly seek him, hearts that are discontented with the godless life of the world and would gladly do what is right—there we go, for we have divine cause to do so. For the heaven and earth is the Lord's and all men are his; but we have given, surrendered and sacrificed ourselves wholly to God. Where he sendeth us and will use us, there we go in obedience to his divine will, regardless of what we must suffer and endure.

Further they have asked us: "As governmental authority is ordained by God and hath its power from him, therefore all should fear and honour it—now, why do not ye also?" Mark the answer! The government is not given for the just to fear, but only for the evil, for the government should be a shield to the just. For this reason the Lord hath given it a sword in the hand, and its annual income in taxes, interest, duties etc., that it may be able to execute its office and protect the just. If it doth not do so, God will punish it the harder. Therefore we are gladly and willingly subject to the government for the Lord's sake, and want in all just matters in no way to oppose it. When, however, the government requireth of us what is contrary to our faith and conscience—as swearing oaths and paying hangman's dues or taxes for war—then we obey not its command. This we do not out of obstinacy or pride, but only out of pure fear of God. For it is our duty to obey God rather than men.

That is the reason we refuse, namely that we fear God. Christ forbiddeth those whom he loveth, those who are meant for life, all carnal wrath and vengeance. Thus they are forbidden to kill, and are told to leave all vengeance to God. Therefore we do naught to help on bloodshed, for such befitteth no Christian who is taught of God in his Son, since we should be like young children, without resentment or bitterness, like a dove, guileless. But to the men of old it was indeed said, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy and love thy friend." "But I say unto you", saith Christ, "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, pray

for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be children of your Father in heaven." Therefore one must distinguish between the Old and the New Testament. "It was indeed said to the men of old, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, and a head for a head; but I say unto you that in all things ye resist not evil."

That we do not swear an oath nor promise on oath, as is the way of the world, hath its origin in the words which Christ saith to those who are his: "To them of old it was said, 'Thou shalt not swear falsely, but perform unto the Lord thy oath.' But I say unto you, swear not at all, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by the earth. But your yea shall be yea, and your nay, nay. What is more than this cometh of evil". Therefore, dear men, consider this when we oppose you in aught; that ye think not that we do it in pride, but only because we fear God, who is indeed to be feared. For the apostles also did not let themselves be driven by the Jews or by any authority from what they had recognized as right before God, rather did they lay down their lives.

And that I hope also with God's help to do, and will let none stop me speak of that which is right before God, especially of what I have seen and heard and sensed in my heart, through the renewal of the Holy Spirit, of the resurrection of Christ Jesus, who hath established new life within us who believe in him, and honour his name, who give ourselves wholly to him and are still before him.

And we say freely and confess openly that among you there is no godly life, as your works also bear witness, but that groweth which the devil hath planted, yea, all manner of unrighteousness gaineth ground, so that it is as though your sin can no longer be opposed. For the world hath run wild, and is so sunken in sin that she knoweth naught of God. And now the very teaching of the gospel is to men a new teaching, a heresy and a false teaching. For when God awakeneth for them a messenger of salvation, who proclaimeth to them the divine Word and showeth them the way of blessedness, they believe him not, but count him a fool, and so regard those who are rich in the Spirit as mad and foolish, so hath their malice blinded them. They kick, as it were, their salvation from them, and make themselves unworthy of eternal life. For they believe not that one can serve God without sin, in true piety, as though it were not possible to leave the sinful, evil nature which is the work of the devil.

Then Satan would be stronger than God—but far be it! For Christ hath been sent by the Father into this world to take away the power of the devil, the old serpent, tread upon his head, destroy his work and banish sin—that is, from all who gladly let their sins be taken away. These are they who listen to his holy Word, believe it with all their hearts, and keep it in a fine, pure and good heart.

Now, doth Christ compel people with the stocks to hear his teaching,

as is the manner of those who think they are Christians? O, no! On the contrary he speaketh only to those who thirst for his justice, who have ears to hear, who are heavy of heart, who would gladly be set free from their sins—who are urged and drawn by God. Know well that faith is not a matter of course, but that it is a special gift, only given to those who love God.

God wanteth no compulsory service. On the contrary, he loveth a free, willing heart that serveth him with a joyful soul and doeth what is right joyfully. As it is written, "Believers will obey God in love", and again, "Those who fear God will do diligently what is pleasing to him and fulfil his law". For God hath not promised those who believe in him a dull, slavish spirit. O, no! But a childlike, zealous, free and willing spirit, in which we also, trusting in faith, cry to God, the Father. He representeth us mightily before him, as John also saith: "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Now, how can the world, yea, all sinners and unjust men, who allow themselves to be ruled by the spirit of evil which driveth them from one evil deed to the next, how can they call to God in such a way, they who not only do not keep his commandments, but do only what is contrary to God? Who cease not to insult his holy name and to rouse him to wrath? How should he be gracious and favourable to them, even should they ask? As the man born blind, whom Christ healed, saith, "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth." And David saith, "If, Lord, I have unrighteousness in my heart, then wilt thou not hear me, O God." And Christ saith, "The true worshippers of God must pray to him in spirit and in truth, for God, who is a Spirit, wanteth such to worship him".

This is once more to be found in the Lord's prayer, which Christ taught his obedient children who held on to him in all temptations, and which he spoke purely for the Word's sake and not for sinners. For no sinner can pray the Lord's prayer in and in accordance with truth, for he hath not given himself into God's obedience. With the first word he beginneth to lie, and in doing so he doeth naught else but mock God and rouse him to wrath, and ask vengeance on himself. Therefore what doth not arise from faith is sin. To the impure naught is pure, for his very mind and conscience are impure. But to the pure all things are pure. His prayer is pleasing to God, as it is urged by God's Spirit. Those, however, who do not have his Spirit, are not his. Only those who are impelled and urged by the same are God's children.

To be continued.

Religion is Politics: Politics is Brotherhood: Brotherhood is Poverty

The best and most perfect way is the way of love. This applies not only to life but also to teaching. The best and most perfect way to inculcate, for example, the virtue of honesty is to show that love implies it. It is probable that no other method can ever be successful: for though we are rational beings, inasmuch as we are persons—have free will, are intellectual in nature and are masters of our actions (at least in part—and a miss is as good as a mile, and if I say *Thank you* even once, I am for ever removed from the world of stocks and stones), yet we use our reasons so rarely and fitfully and with so rash a carelessness—without training or discipline; we follow our prejudices and predilections with such confidence and impudence that any appeal based upon rational argument is unlikely to be successful.

Moreover the lovely has a wider reference than the reasonable; what we love we do not merely desire—it is something that, whether consciously or not, we recognize to be right as well as good, not only desirable but also as it ought to be; and the fact that this recognition is arrived at by that leap of the intelligence which we call intuition, and not by discursive reasoning and the painful process of thinking it out, step by step by logical argument, seems to show that reasoning is both unnecessary and absurd—an affair of dons and intellectual prigs.

In spite of all this and because, to-day, we live in a world professedly rational and ruled by reason and calculation, by the scientific method of observation and measurement (though this is a great illusion, for few people are more unscientific than scientists when they are away from their instruments, few more irrational than men of business, either in or out of their counting houses, and few more foolish or sentimental than engineers when they sit at home in the evenings), in spite of all this it may be useful to show how profoundly stupid are the notions of those who seek riches and that the acceptance and honour of poverty is plain commonsense.

We Christians believe in God; we call him Father, to designate the fact that we love him as a person. To know the will of our father is obviously the first object of intelligent children, who have attained to the use of reason. There is nothing arbitrary about this—it is stupid to do anything else, it is stupid to act contrary to our father's will or even in ignorance of it. And if this is the basis of domestic life it is also and equally the basis of social life and therefore of human politics. Perpetual warfare and the resulting disorder and misery cannot be God's will for men. To discover his will and to act upon it must be the first rule in all human affairs. Therefore it is that we may say: *religion is politics*.

For without religion, a knowledge of God's will, an answer to the countryman's question "*What's it all for?*" there can be no real politics but only the shifting sands of irrational selfishness and violence. Is not this commonsense? For obviously it is not in accord with our nature to desire disorder, pain, disease, ugliness and insecurity; and how can we achieve peace, "the tranquility of order", how achieve loveliness, unless we know the will of our Father who is in heaven, the author and sustainer and ruler? What will can be effective against his? What can be more sensible than to love the Author of all that is loveable and of all that we love, and to do his will?

And as religion is politics, so *politics is brotherhood*. For the only possible first principle of political action must be the brotherhood of men. The brotherhood of men is directly implied by the Fatherhood of God. To enable men to live in harmony together, to establish peace among men of good will, to maintain justice and to protect the humble from the depredations of the brutally selfish and acquisitive, the thieves and the gluttons; these are the business of politics. Attempt to maintain the opposite. It is absurd! Who could seriously affirm that the object of human politics was to enable thieves and robbers to carry on undisturbed? That may seem to be the chief business of national government to-day; but no politician would admit it. We are all the children of one Father, and if children, brothers. All wars are civil wars. The doctrine of sovereign states is a superstition. The doctrine of higher and lower races is based simply on the determination of the powerful to overawe the simple. For the simple races are not without courage; they are only lacking machines. And the powerful races are not enlightened, they are only clever — with the cleverness of ants and wasps and spiders. Politics is brotherhood — how to contrive the hierarchy of man. How to arrange our affairs so that the better shall not be at the mercy of the worse. How to ensure that the merely cunning and grasping shall not reduce their brothers to slavery. How to reduce the man of money to his proper subordination.

Politics is brotherhood — and *brotherhood is poverty*. That is the secret, revealed two thousand years ago and, in spite of countless saints and prophets, hardly yet known to men... Brotherhood is poverty. Imagine the opposite! Let us say that in order to achieve the brotherhood of men we will bend all our energies to the job of getting rich. We will worship those who have much and despise the poor. We will so order our parliaments that rich men can control law-making and poor men have nothing but votes. We will so contrive our law-courts that only the rich shall be able to afford the charges of those who plead. We will so arrange the business of production and transport that those who lend or invest capital shall be able to reduce those who work to "a sub-human condition of intellectual irresponsibility", thus causing them

perpetual shame and discontent, and so sowing the seeds of hatred and violence. And having done all these things we will then attempt appeasement by means of a larger police force and greater armaments. Such politics may enable a few to acquire riches, but it will certainly never achieve human brotherhood.

If there is one thing more than another which stands out in the Gospels, it is our Lord's doctrine of poverty. To go without, to give up, to lose rather than to gain—to have little rather than much—that is his positive teaching. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the humble, the common man, the common workman, the simple women—mothers of children. "*How hard is it for a rich man to enter heaven!*" But in spite of all this and in spite of the obvious failure of the politics of those who seek riches, we still refuse to believe. We still think our Lord's teaching is only a counsel of perfection; that it doesn't apply to us—to ordinary men and women; that it only applies to those called to heroic virtue. We still do not see that it is plain human wisdom as well as divine revelation.

All our politics are based on a denial of the Gospels. Our capitalist society is founded solely upon the notion that those who have money have the duty to get more, and that those who have none must be enslaved, or exploited, or "employed"—until machines make their existence unnecessary. The Fascist societies want to create empires and become as rich and great as the others. The Communist societies want to make the rich poor in order that the poor may become rich. But the Church of God wants to make the rich poor and the poor holy.

This is the circle of human politics: When we have accepted poverty there will be peace among men. Only when we make peace shall we become the children of God. Only when we love God shall we love our fellow men. Only when we love our fellow men shall we have peace. When we have peace we shall have poverty, and when we have poverty we shall have the Kingdom of Heaven.

ERIC GILL

Practical Community Life in Sweden

On a journey which Adolf Braun, who has been for years a member of the Bruderhof communities, made to Sweden in 1937 to come into contact with seeking people there, he came across the community of which Erik Andersson is leader, in the province of Waermland. During his short stay, he received strong impressions of a community life in absolute poverty, devoid of all private property—a life directed by Christ and inspired by his Spirit, a thoroughly practical, peasant life.

As we wanted to learn more of the religious basis and history of this community group, which is so similar to the Bruderhof although with a stronger emphasis in the direction of the apostolic wandering communities, we asked Erik Andersson to send us a short description of the community in Witteby for THE PLOUGH, that other circles might get to know of the fact of this community life built on a Christian basis. Erik Andersson writes:

If I am to write about our activity, which as we see it is so small and insignificant for our fellows in the greatness of world need, I have not much to say, for I find it difficult to speak of us and of myself. I would rather learn with others to believe in Christ, and let him reign here and now over us. One thing, however, I would like to say. We have founded our activity on the teaching of Jesus as it is declared in the Gospels, especially in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the principles of life of the Early Christians. Our activity began in the year 1912, when Dr. David Petander and the undersigned left their former condition of life and devoted themselves utterly to the service of the Kingdom of God.

We had recognized that according to the word of Jesus a radical, one must say a completely new Christianity was necessary; yes, a new earth, on which men live together in peace. We wandered from place to place, and the Gospel was our sole foundation. We kept ourselves free from all organizations and proclaimed the message of the Kingdom of God. It was not long before we met with opposition and resistance, but as we could not be untrue to our work, which was for us the truth of our souls, the distinction between false preaching and the true teaching of Jesus Christ of the Kingdom of God became ever clearer. Then when the World War broke out the opposition between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world came sharply to a head. Thus it was that we both received the order to mobilize. We refused to obey, and so had an opportunity of bringing our proclamation of peace more clearly to the public. David Petander was at once arrested and imprisoned for trial, but after several days was set free. He was so fragile and ill that he died shortly afterwards. Then I continued the work alone. I wrote a letter to the responsible military authorities, saying that I could not do what was commanded, though I was offered such indulgence as few received: I was only to take a course in sick nursing, and in the case of war was to be permitted to stay at home. I explained that I had given my whole life to Christ, and that it followed that I had no time to spend where people were killing each other with weapons. My time was given me to prevent men from destroying each other with the sword. I added that it was their duty to obey Christ's teaching and not to resist evil—otherwise Europe would bring about its own destruction. So I continued my work in the evenings

and on Sundays, and in the course of time a little group gathered, who went out in the same faith, in voluntary poverty to serve all who were poor or sick, and wherever help was most needed. The group was composed mostly of teachers, nurses and others whose practical training was put to good use. Their sole aim was to win men to the life-giving law of the Spirit, which leads to love and mercy.

Gradually some recognized that a home was necessary for these voluntarily homeless people, a place where they could have shelter and receive the strength which they needed for body and soul. Some also came who possessed farms, and wanted to join us. They had to choose whether they would keep what was theirs or sacrifice themselves for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In this way we received several homes, which were placed under the rule and authority of love. Thus we tried to follow Christ's teaching.

Later we moved from Norrland to Waermland in order to be better able to live a real communal life with farming and gardening. We spin and weave our clothes ourselves, and build our houses ourselves in so far as we are able. We regard our whole life as a humble beginning towards the Kingdom that Christ wanted to found and establish on earth, and believe that we must submit ourselves completely and utterly to his Word, that the will of God might be revealed on earth.

For Jesus came to reveal the will of the Father to us men on the earth, to reveal how to live aright and to please our Creator. But men have not accepted the revelation of the Father which Jesus brought into the world in his life, because he came in so humble and sorry a way. He came as the prophet says, "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah LII, 14). "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrow and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah LIII, 2-3). Hence even the high priests, who were highly respected by the people, could not accept his teaching, but took offence at him.

The Jews had waited diligently for the Messiah who was to come of David's house and lineage; but when he came with his proclamation of peace, the law of the new covenant, the message of the heavenly Kingdom, which was not to be of this world, they took offence at him and said, "Is not this the son of Joseph and Mary, whose father and mother we know . . . ?" The Jews believed in worldly power. Hence when faced by the might of God, which they met in Christ, they broke the fifth commandment of the law of Moses. Jesus' words testify clearly that we cannot serve two masters, two kingdoms. For when the Jewish

people met him, who had accepted the law of the Kingdom of Heaven in his life, yes, when they met Christ in his glory, they were faced with the decision: to break with the might of the prince of this world, or to oppose their own King, for whom they had waited, and who was sent them by God. Which did the Jews decide to do? They said, "Crucify the Lord of Love, our King; but set the robber free!" But to those who did not believe in worldly power, who groaned under the violence of tyrants, Jesus gave the hope: "The Son of Man will return! Then he will take over the Kingdom and power for all eternity."

What will the throne of Christ's glory look like when he comes? Do we believe that he will come in another glory from that which he had when he came the first time? He came then, surrounded by willing disciples, and as long as they believed in him they could declare the might of his glory in healing and giving life. This was the radically other might with which he confronted the world's might of the sword. The Father has recognized the form of 'servant' and has given him great glory. He has given him power over the quick and the dead, because he is the Son of Man (John V, 27).

To want nothing for himself, but everything for the others—in this lies his glory, his royal power. Jesus' disciple said, "We saw his glory, as that of the only begotten of the Father". They were permitted to see a man full of grace and truth! That is, a man free from condemnation and lies, a man who had power to forgive, heal and make healthy, yes, to revive from death. Certainly we must say this is a greater might and glory than the royal thrones of the kingdoms of the world, than the glitter of gold, and of the sword that takes the life of men. We have really only to choose between these two thrones: on the one hand the throne of Christ, and on the other the throne of the prince of the world. Before which ought we to bow and to which should we give our life? Ought we to bow before the throne of grace and truth and give it power over our life, or ought we to bow before the throne of judgment, of hatred and of violence, with its power of the sword? The one power gives life; the other takes life. The one throne is recognized by God; the other is rejected by God! Before which do we bow,—you and I? Our salvation or destruction lies in this question. Ought we to acknowledge the return of the Son of Man as right in our life and over the whole earth, or ought we to withdraw ourselves from it? If we do the latter, then we shall be drawn into the power of violence, the power that wanted to destroy the life of Jesus. All who want to follow Christ and fight for the Kingdom, look upon the Son! The Son did not avoid death, but let himself be pierced by the sword of his opponents. He preferred to suffer wrong than to do wrong. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have

power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John X, 17-18).

The crime men committed against him could not make him leave his attitude of love. The Father, like the Son, never breaks the fifth commandment which they have given us to keep. Thus no Christian breaks it who has grasped the meaning of Christianity. The Father wanted to give us, through the Son, another picture from that which we had from the fathers. Through the revelation of the Son we were permitted to see the nature and character of the Father. How completely lofty is the Father, and utterly untouched by the wrath, hatred and malice of men, who have risen up so mutinously against God on seeing the Son!

We see the complete victory of love over death. A Christian may give his life, but not deny the truth! Jesus became a sacrifice by being true to the Father and the truth within him, the truth which he wills to give us, that we might come out of the darkness. When there was no place left for him on earth where he was allowed to live out the life of love, in obedience and faith he gave up his life. He did not give his spirit to the Prince of Death, but in the complete faith that love is stronger than death he committed his spirit to God. And in so doing he saved the life of many from death and from having to kill—by giving his own life. And we could see that the Prince of Death had no power to keep perfect love in his grasp. He had to give back his prey—Jesus rose again! Love triumphed over death! Each Christian who confesses Christ ought to give him full power over him, including the right of possession over everything created. That is the very least. For he says, "*All things* are delivered unto me of my Father" (Matthew XI, 27).

ERIK ANDERSSON

The Cotswold Bruderhof

A report of the events and activities in 1938

With the present number of THE PLOUGH we are entering into a new year, and together with all mankind we wonder what the future will bring. We are living in a time of wars and rumours of wars, at a time when the established foundations which have been accepted and built upon for so long are changing and shifting. Nothing is certain, the future is unclear, everywhere there is anxiety. At this hour when men put their trust in their own strength, either to acquire what they want or to hold what they have, we feel that it is of especial importance that a life should be lived where the only trust is in God, and where in consequence the aims of peace, of love, of brotherly justice, of purity and of complete unity should be sought and carried out, as the building up of a quite new order of society.

In this sense we feel that it will be of interest and a joy to our friends to know of the growth of the Bruderhof during the past year, for our aims are solely peace and brotherhood and this new order.

We have had much to be thankful for, and have much to report, both in the outward and inward building up of the community witness. At the beginning of the year we experienced the uniting of the Almbruderhof with our Cotswold Bruderhof, which meant that our whole brotherhood in Europe was united again in one community for the first time in four years. The inorganic division of our Rhœnbruderhof in 1934, due to the new conditions in Germany in the year 1933, had brought with it many difficulties, and the organic order of life which we have learned particularly from the communities of America (of the Brothers known as the "Hutterians") with their four centuries of community living, had been greatly disturbed. Thus it was that, for example, all the schoolchildren and all young men of military age were at one community, and the children under school age and the older members to a great extent at the other community; or again a lack of certain talents was felt at the one Bruderhof, whereas members with just those capabilities were, because of circumstances, at the other Bruderhof. The joy which was felt in March of last year was not only the joy of seeing dearly loved brothers and sisters again, but also the knowledge that, united, we could work with increased power at the task of building up a "City of Peace".

So it was with great happiness that we were able, at the beginning of the year, to nominate a number of brothers to undertake responsibilities, both spiritual and temporal, in accordance with the need of an organism and the experience and practice of the Brothers (known as the Hutterians), and having its basis upon the order of the early Christian Church. We ourselves, as a new beginning of brotherly life, have never had such a number of people in one Bruderhof before, and in the course of the year we have learned by experience how valuable such a well-ordered life is. We are indeed thankful for the hundreds of years of experience which the Brothers have had, and which we share by our union with them.

Our year was chiefly occupied with this ordering of the community again, and with the building up to meet the demands of the large number of people of which the community now consists. Our energies were turned, one might say, more towards that which is within, and nevertheless we saw the strength of attraction and the strength of witness which lies in the very fact of the existence of such an order of brotherhood. For last year more new people came to us and joined us than in any other year of our existence. Altogether twenty-six new people became full members, and only one of them had grown up in the community. Another ten entered the time of probation. It was a particular

joy to us at Whitsun that the Birmingham community group (see report of their Easter visit in *THE PLOUGH*, No. 2, p. 60) could decide to unite completely with us. This group of seven people had felt urged to live in community largely as the result of contact with the Bruderhof in Germany and in Liechtenstein, and after we came to England they felt themselves challenged to put into practice that which they believed in their hearts to be right. Others of our new members came from that Sudeten territory which was so much before the eyes of men in the recent crisis: a simple fact proving that men of different nations which, outside the Spirit of Christ, are at loggerheads, find it really possible in his service to live at peace and unity one with another. There were other new members from Holland, and we have now a group of nine Dutch people who have come to us as a result of our stay there, after the Rhœnbruderhof had been confiscated and we had been expelled from Germany.

The fact that a child of our community, having reached the age of discretion, of her own free will has chosen to go the selfless way of brotherhood and discipleship of Jesus, reminded us again of the great educational task which we have with our own children and with children who have been entrusted to us, particularly that they too, by way of example, might feel the longing to serve God and their fellowmen on the way of fellowship and sharing. This step in each instance means a radical decision for denial of self-interest and for the discipleship of Jesus, with whatever consequences that may bring, but the fact that so many of our children when they grow up decide for such a way is a testimony that the childlike nature, when unspoiled, has this longing for a life of service to others.

As most of our friends know who have visited us here, we feel that the true Christian marriage of faithfulness between one man and one woman, for the whole of their days, is not the least part of the Christian witness in our present age. It was therefore with particular happiness that we celebrated six weddings among our members during the year. In the same way, we are very thankful for the many children who were given to us. The children of our community, who now number one hundred in all, are a great joy to our communal life. In addition to the children born to our families, it was possible for us to adopt two little English babies of two and six months of age, who come from the need of industrial slum conditions and will now be brought up with two of our families.

The year also brought its sorrow to us, through the loss of two little children and of the ninety-two year old Jabez Watkins, who had come to us with his wife and daughter from Birmingham in the summer. At the same time it meant an experiencing of the absolute nearness of little children to the reality beyond physical life, to God and eternity;

and in the loss of our old friend who had grown so dear to us during the months which we had known him, we felt the quiet surety with which all can face their end who have a living expectation of the time when the love of God, and his will, shall be accepted throughout his whole creation.

Although, as we have already explained, a great deal of energy and work has been necessary for the building up of the community in a way adequate for the two hundred and fifty people which we now number, it has still been possible for a number of our members to be outside the community, and to give a witness of the possibility of a life of complete brotherhood. We were able to speak at more than fifty meetings up and down the country, though mainly in towns such as London, Bristol, Nottingham and Birmingham, and the neighbouring towns of Cirencester, Swindon and Cheltenham. Through this medium a specially happy and warm friendship developed between the Bruderhof and a number of workers in Swindon, and also with members of several Toc H groups in the neighbourhood. We were glad to be able to use the house in which the Birmingham community had formerly lived and which, as a result of their uniting with us, now belongs to the Bruderhof, for the purpose of establishing contacts with the outside world. For a period of about six months, there were constantly some three or four of our members living in Birmingham, giving talks to various groups, visiting meetings of other movements, and selling our woodwork, and during that time they visited countless friends, both old and new, to whom they sought to give a simple testimony of the need and the possibility of a practical witness of love and brotherhood.

Towards the end of the year, two of our members made a journey to Switzerland, one of them staying six weeks there to renew contact with many old friends whom we have known as the result of the journeys of the brothers of the Almbruderhof. They visited also a number of settlements which, like ourselves, have realized that a life of simplicity and sharing is necessary for brotherhood.

The past year also meant a great increase of the number of visitors whom we were able to welcome amongst us. Apart from the countless local friends who were shown round, there has been a great influx of guests who worked and stayed with us for some time, mainly from this country but also from India, America, Canada and a great number of European countries including Germany, Holland and Switzerland. The two largest groups were the Workers' Educational Association group of three hundred people from Swindon, and the Folk House party of ninety people from Bristol. Other groups visiting us were students from Woodbrooke in Birmingham, teachers from Bath and Bristol, and various W. E. A. and P. P. U. groups. We, as a community, were thus

able to hear and discuss a great variety of views and philosophies, very much to our own stimulation and deepening of knowledge. On the other hand, those who came to us also received impressions which may mean something to them for their further life.

Also among our guests and helpers last summer were seven members of the International Voluntary Service for Peace, who helped for six weeks to build a proper sewage system. We are very thankful for their friendship and for the work they did, and we also wish to thank all the others who came in answer to our appeals published in *The Friend* and *Peace News*, and helped us.

In a year when we have had so much to do with the building up of our new community here, we have been very thankful for the work of our publishing house. THE PLOUGH brought us a wide circle of new contacts as well as keeping us in close touch with old friends. At the same time we published our booklet in English, the essay "The Individual and World Need". Many of us at the Bruderhof and many of our friends owe a great deal to the writings of Eberhard Arnold and to the books which were printed earlier in our former German publishing house, and we wish in the future to publish more of these works. The reception of "The Individual and World Need" has been a great encouragement to us. At the time of the crisis, we were able to use the publishing house as a medium of witness by printing 15,000 copies of "A Call, the Way to a True Peace", in English, German and Dutch, and distributing them in these countries, as well as in Switzerland and Sweden and other lands. The response to this appeal was very encouraging, and it was felt that this clear challenge meant a lot to a great number of people. The "Call" was reprinted in the French paper *L'Essor*, in the Swedish *Idealisten* and in various Dutch papers. A great deal of the work of the printing shop was devoted, also, to a re-issue of Peter Rideman's 'Rechenschaft', written by one of the first elders of the Hutterian communities about the year 1540, and mentioned in our previous report.

During the past year, the need of mankind and the injustice of the present order was brought home to us all with exceptional force by the conditions in Germany, and particularly through the terrible persecution of the Jews. We ourselves feel deeply for them in their need, and during the last four months of the year we were able to give hospitality to eighteen refugees from Vienna, who have shared in our life here and have since been able to find new possibilities for their future. Although this was all that we could do ourselves, because of lack of accommodation and other difficulties, we were very glad that so many of our friends helped by giving hospitality to numerous other non-Aryans in need who had appealed to us for help. We have also consented to take a number of refugee children into our children's community.

In the course of the year we have built a long line of workshops, with

smithy, carpenter's shop, mill, storage for corn, and storage for agricultural machinery. A bakehouse has been built, and one of the children's buildings extended. Further dwellings were also provided by the conversion of the old stable in the main yard into a dwelling house, where three families are now living.

The year on the farm and in the garden was quite good, excepting that our hay harvest was adversely affected by the severe drought at the beginning of the year. This has meant for us, as for so many other farmers, that we have had to take extra measures in order to feed our cattle through the winter.

On the whole, our economic situation during the year 1938 has been one of great struggle with lack of capital, a struggle which was not altogether unsuccessful. In any case, the situation was very much improved towards the end of the year, due to various factors. Firstly came the formation of the company 'The Friends of the Bruderhof, Limited', which was registered in August instead of 'The Plough Publishing Company' announced in our report in THE PLOUGH (Vol. I. No. 1, p. 35). This was first formed as a private company, and later converted into a public company. A number of friends have helped us by subscribing for 4% redeemable preference shares. The company advances all its capital to the Bruderhof, to be repaid within a period of twenty years, and the loans are being secured by a charge on the Bruderhof's real property at Ashton Fields farm, Ashton Keynes. The capital received through this company has somewhat eased the difficulties caused by the Bruderhof's lack of means for the building up and extension of its various branches of work, and still more has this been the case through the considerable help of two friends, which enabled us among other things to take in hand a very substantial building programme in the New Year. We are very thankful for this, and are now facing with even greater confidence the problem of stabilizing and extending our economic basis for our growing numbers.

The first step in this direction has been the purchase of further land. Oaksey Park farm and manor house is a very fine estate of 300 acres, chiefly used for dairy purposes, and we intend to continue to produce milk there, as we have done here, but on a larger scale. The buildings, which are in Cotswold style, will also be a great help to us and relieve our shortage of accommodation.

As most of our friends know, as the result of persecution and of an uncompromising witness for peace and justice among men on the basis of Christ's teaching, we came to England penniless three years ago, and the fact that means were given to us to extend our work further during the past year is a cause for great thankfulness, and a fresh confirmation of the trust we have in God that he will care for us. All that we have we are prepared to share, without any anxiety for the future, with all

who wish to go a brotherly way of life with us. Men who hear the call of Jesus Christ come to us. The numbers increase, and at a time when it is absolutely necessary that new means should be provided, God does provide it, either in that a man's heart is moved to share in this life and to give all that he has to it, or that men who are not prepared to give themselves completely to such a way, but who feel the rightness of it, are moved to help with the necessary means out of goodwill. We are glad of all help which we receive of this nature. Best of all we would wish that all men might give all that they are, and all that they have, to the cause of brotherhood and peace, for we know that all men are called to belong completely to God their Creator, and that all things of his creation should be devoted to his cause and to his honour.

The year 1938, with its threat of war and of coming disaster, brought home clearly to us the need of men, and we are thankful, too, that once again men were spared the worst horrors of the disunity and injustice which reign everywhere among them: the worst horror in the form of war. If only we men would take advantage of the breathing space which is given to us, to consider our position and to seek to wipe out the roots of war which lie in injustice, impurity and insincerity, in the hardness of heart one to another which is so evident even in this so-called time of peace! All men fear war, and realize its horror, and yet how many of the millions of mankind set out wholeheartedly to devote all their time, all their energy and all that they have to the building up of a new order which will make war impossible? The crisis of last September made us see more clearly than ever the folly of the existing unbrotherly order among men. Will disaster overtake men? We know that man reaps what he sows, and we hope and long for men that they might love one another and be brothers one to another, yet it is so clear that mankind continues on its way, almost unconcerned.

Peace and joy and true life will only reign among men when the Spirit of God dwells in their hearts. This is the only hope for men, the only way that does not lead to disaster. Therefore we pledge ourselves anew for the future to live only for an order of peace and brotherhood, calling upon all men to do likewise, and having a confident faith in the final victory.

BRUCE SUMNER

The Bubbling Spring

A short review of some community activities in 1938

Twelve months ago the first issue of THE PLOUGH carried an attempted survey of the movement towards community in this country. What has been happening since then? To a casual observer in a noisy world, very little; but community makes little noise and he would be

wrong. Indeed, there never has been a time probably when so many people—and so many sorts and conditions of people—were all searching their hearts about this same matter. As a recent writer has noted elsewhere: “there is bubbling up among believers in every land — like the commotion of a hot spring—a myriad of variegated efforts towards community . . . there is everywhere experiment in collectivism. And in infinitely wider areas there are myriads of folk talking, discussing, dreaming of better ways of ordering society than this poor present shows.”*

This review describes something of our own observation—limited as it is—of this “bubbling spring”. It is just over a year since a dozen people in a small room at Bow were committed to the unknown effort of a Community Service Committee. They were to be first and foremost a contact medium. The effort was unassuming, the hope was great and the outcome has been illuminating. Day after day since that time the letters have been coming in from the world outside—yes, even from such a far away world as the Middle West and the Antipodes. They have reflected faithfully the unity and the diversity — “many gifts but one spirit”—that is the real stuff of community. They come from men and women of widely differing background and experience and they cut a clear road through the barbed wire entanglements of class and creed, race and faction, education, denomination and occupation. In a sense one person might have written them all because all are glimpsing an issue and seeking to face up to it. And it is the same issue that they see, though not all are seeing it from the same angle.

Then, too, there is the lengthening list of requests for community speakers at those group meetings which have become so large a factor in contemporary life. Peace groups, church groups, workers’ groups and study circles of professional men are “wanting to know”. Everywhere up and down the country there are questions, so many questions, searching, critical, often unanswerable except by living experience. But here also is evidence of something that is awake and stirring.

In several areas, group interest has begun to crystallize out in more or less defined ways. It is so in Somerset, where a Wessex Community League took shape at Bleadon one day last June, with John Smyth as its secretary. On Merseyside, Norman Slatford and Margaret Corke have focussed the local concern in an area conference and some outlines for action.

In East Anglia Philip Butler is giving the experienced counsel of a “good neighbour” to the experimental developments there, and in Cardiff E.C. Haig and his group are exploring the possibilities of a homecroft for unemployed men on lines laid down by Professor J. W. Scott.

*‘The Coracle’ (The Iona Community) October 1938.

In Edinburgh, Duncan Brown is working amongst the Friends and the Scottish Peace Group and hoping to bring pacifist interest to a practical point in a community workshop.

For if patriotism is not enough, neither is pacifism unless and until it becomes a whole way of life. That is an increasing realization in the peace movement of to-day. Community comes as a corollary to propagandist activity and it has found a great deal of friendly support in the peace press. Indeed, notes and news of community are reaching a wide public to-day through a number of channels — religious, pacifist and secular. Occasionally they find themselves in unexpected company.

There are significant signs from the churches — not only in the collective pronouncements of Oxford but in the activities of communions and groups where individual conviction must always find its expression. Here it is an urge to make the sharing of Holy Communion at an Anglican altar rail the symbol of a not less actual sharing of worldly goods amongst the communicants of a needy parish. There it is a Free Church conception of retreats on a communal pattern, where church members may come apart from guilds and bazaars and socials for a while to deepen fellowship with God and with one another. Elsewhere a suggestion emerges into print that outlying country parishes should constitute themselves as Christian agricultural groups, with communal farms and with the life and worship of the Church at their centre. A declaration by a Scottish churchman says, "we believe that Christ is making a great revelation of his place in the social order of our day..." Again a Methodist student writes, "our Methodist Church encourages experiment and many of us feel that future church life will be of an intense community nature".

Such straws show how the wind of the Spirit is sweeping across — and may yet sweep away — the narrow sectarian barriers to a real community of Christians of every name and sign.

And what about new community developments? Edmund Cocksedge is at the moment ploughing a lone furrow on the new Elmsett community farm in Suffolk. He will be joined there in a few weeks by a group of pacifists, including Bert Shipley, who has filled the chair at our meetings all through our past happy year of work together.

The evolution of full community in a Sussex farmhouse at Micklepage was described by George Gibson — with whom we are also associated for service — in a meeting at Bayswater. St. Hilda's-in-the-Fields" has special interest as a new country group with its roots in a Camberwell Mission settlement.

The Community of the Way — another East London Group known to all who know Mary Osborn — has achieved its own miracles of faith and work in the single workroom at Bow which serves for spinning, weaving, dyeing, toy-making, joinery, hand-printing and communal

gatherings. It awaits an open way to full community in the country—but not beyond reach of the industrial areas and the special needs that brought it into being.

The East End has produced yet another new venture in the fine work which Kundan Jalie is doing amongst the Indian street merchants at Aldgate. Jalie has lived amongst these exiles, visited them in hospital and instituted a hostel for them. He plans to develop with them a communal tailoring group with the co-operation of one or two friends. The Brotherhood of the Way has established its community centre at Hitchin and developed a baking unit. Those who attended the latest Bow Conference can testify to the excellence of the bread and cakes made by them.

It is a far cry from the home counties to the western isles of Scotland, but the Community of Iona provides perhaps one of the most interesting community studies of the year. How a mixed group of ministers, theological students, artisans and professional men lived together in a log hut and found community amongst the ruins of St. Columba is something which is described fully in their own magazine, as also is the function of the island community as a training ground for missionary service in the widening housing areas of Scotland. The co-operative rebuilding of the Abbey of Iona will be a progressive labour of love, an act of worship and a part of the communal witness.

Finally, there are the new "sharing groups" which provide the most ready pattern for urban community. One or two of these are in being in London, one at Cambridge, and isolated friends in some other areas are keen to join with others in sharing a house and pooling their income. The wider growth of such groups would provide at the same time a useful training for full community life and a ready-made market for the producing groups as they develop.

With the problem of the distressed areas still unsolved, the new problem of the refugees has come down upon us, and found us largely unprepared. Immediate help has been given by the Bruderhof, and parties of Austrians are installed at Hugh's Settlement and elsewhere. But in community surely lies the future answer as well as the immediate response to the tragedy of the dispossessed—of our own unemployed and of these homeless ones from abroad. For in community alone can a man live a free life, producing for his own needs and those of his fellows without direct challenge to the livelihood of those who are still struggling for a living in the competitive markets of the world. Indeed, a group of Austrian settlers at Brecon have recognized this and proclaimed their belief in a challenging manifesto. Professor Scott has produced a pamphlet on the same subject and this will be shortly available for information and distribution. In special, it is the plight of the refugee children which cries out for the best that community can offer.

Workers such as Dr. St. Wittlin are giving themselves wholly to the task not only of finding sanctuary for the children but of finding them friendship also. That is true community service.

The mention of community service brings a reminder of John Hoyal's new movement to extend the "work-camps" and to mobilize a national voluntary service for the constructive work of peace—now so largely overlooked in the rush for gasmasks and the organization of civil defence squads. And amongst the lesser tasks of peace may be reckoned the effort which is being made at Sutton Valence to organize the exchange of local allotment produce for clothing and other payment in kind, through the medium of the Brotherhood Trust Extension Society. The experiment is worth extending. Some of the Kentish produce was on sale at the Bow Conference, where J. Theodore Harris instituted a miniature Covent Garden for the purpose.

Conferences, be it confessed, are an infirmity to which community also is subject. Yet these, too, have their moments and bear their fruits in due season. The F. O. R. Youth Gathering at Westcliff; the Kempsham Hall meetings of the Christian Social Council; the Study Course on community at the Bayswater Peace Centre; the Parkgate Conference in Cheshire; the Wessex Meetings and the second London Conference at Kingsley Hall are all in their way landmarks of "community evangelism".

So also is the book "Community in Britain" which is gradually finding its way not only all over the country but across the world as well: already copies have been posted to Canada; to U. S. A.; to France, Turkey and India. It is encouraging to find from letters received that its story is presenting a direct challenge: that is its declared mission.

And so 1939 opens and such clouds are gathering as none of us have yet seen. Before the breaking of the storm there is still time—but not much time—for positive witness to the things that belong to peace. With that witness community has to do. With much talk everywhere of national duty and service, our duty and our service is first and always to the Kingdom yet to be made known. Almost it seems that those who can discern the signs of the times are drawing a little apart, listening for a summons soon to be sounded, watching for the rising of a long awaited light over the black rim of our warring world.

LESLIE STUBBINGS

Every responsibility implies a forum before which we can be called to render an account. The Christian recognizes ultimately no other instance than God himself. He must always obey God rather than men, and it can mean but little to him to be judged by men or from the standpoint of a human day.

EBERHARD ARNOLD

FORUM

THE CONNECTIONS OF THE QuAKERS WITH THE HUTTERIAN COMMUNITIES

Dear Friend, — I have been much interested in the article in "The Plough" on *The Connections of Quakers with the Hutterian Communities*, and in the question there raised as to whether the early Quaker social reformer John Bellers had any knowledge of these communities in the 17th century, through direct communication with those Quakers who had visited them, such as William Moore and John Philly. It is an interesting suggestion and one that seems highly probable, but I doubt if there is any direct known evidence of the fact.

It has to be borne in mind that Bellers' proposition for a community or 'College of Industry' is quite in keeping with the experience, as he must have known, of all the free Groups in the history of the Church from very ancient times. (Doubtless his thinking thereon would be deepened if he discussed his project with those who had seen such communities in being.) Ecclesiasticism permitted of full community life only in monasticism, and strictly under control of the authorities of the world-church. For the rest of mankind, in the imperial and feudal ages, it would have been highly unacceptable to the imperial and feudal rulers and the possessing classes. But the free and heretical forms of Group Christianity always turned to it. Jakob Huter was a born organizer, and the Hutterian Communities are the best evidence thereof. But the whole Anabaptist movement sought to express itself in communities large and small. Muenster, of course, was a somewhat fanatical and devastating example, but many other free Groups formed excellent communities, including the Mennonites of Fox's day.

One would have expected the Quaker movement, with its origins so largely Anabaptist, to have been naturally inclined toward what Tr  ltsch called a 'caritative communism'. 'Early Christianity revived', as they described their movement, would suggest to these Quakers, one would have thought, the practice of 'all things in common', and the community of love of the first disciples. One has to realize, I suppose, that by the 17th century protestant individualism was in the full swing of a new awakening to individual human freedom, and all communistic ideas were being set aside as probably wrong. It was at this stage of North European religious thinking that was being built up, what Max Weber has called in the title of his important book, 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism'. That is, these were being integrated in a new religious concept. And capitalism and communism do not square with one another.

Fox was a spiritual prophet, but he was not a very clear social thinker, and though he suggested to the Friends a community of sorts, he does not appear to have pressed it. Bellers was equally unsuccessful in that age with his much better thought out 'College of Industry'. The times in fact were wholly against any experiments of the kind.

The putting forward of these ideas, however, shows that these early Quakers were not far from the love-communism of the past. Fox took the line that his chief work, in the protestant and calvinistic atmosphere of the Commonwealth period, was to press on his followers the central Christian duty of 'everyone feeling another's condition' — 'feel everyone's condition as your own'. The tide of puritan religious individualism was seemingly too strong to turn this into a full community life. One would dearly love to have not only the record of visits to the then existing Hutterian Communities, but constructive and friendly criticism *by the visitors* that would indicate current thinking. Perhaps "The Plough" can help in the unearthing of some such instructive documentation.

— Your friend sincerely,
Guildford.

CARL HEATH

Community Notes and News

(All letters for Community Service Committee to Hon. Sec., 'Chancton', Dartnell Park, West Byfleet, Surrey. Stamp please for reply.)

The new community at Elmsett in Suffolk is now taking shape. An advance party has been at work on this farm for some weeks, and it is hoped that the group of ten will be in residence during the month. A new well and a small motor van for shifting produce are among immediate needs.

Elmsett is specifically a pacifist community, and is registered as a P.P.U. group. It has been formed "in the realization that pacifism implies more than a mere refusal to take part in war; that social and economic justice are essential to the attainment of a non-violent society. Rather than spend time and energy in attacking the present order, the group wishes to live constructively as a small cell of an order based on new values, spiritual, social and economic." Enquiries about this new group have been received already from several quarters.

Dugald Semple, a pacifist of the 1914 days, writes, "we have a few acres of land here which we would like to develop along the lines of co-operative activity and simple living by a group of Christian pacifists." 'Here' refers to Beith in Ayrshire.

E. C. Haig and eight members of the Cardiff Peace Group are attempting to work out a small home-crofting scheme, on lines laid down by Professor J. W. Scott, for the benefit of local unemployed men.

An area conference was held just before Christmas at Parkgate, Ches., on the theme "Community — here and now". Arising out of this, a small group are exploring plans for a form of co-operative living.

Duncan Brown reports an experimental community workshop in Edinburgh.

Frederick Gedye, of 49, Milton Road, Herne Hill, S.E. 24, writes: "Would those living in London and willing to discuss the possibilities of forming a Christian income-pooling scheme, please get in touch".

A letter from Richmond Theological College says: "There are several men in college keenly interested in the idea of community life... many of us feel that future church life will be of an intense community nature".

Dr. George MacLeod of Glasgow has been making known "Community in Britain" to friends at the Madras conference.

A recent letter in the "Church Times" suggests the adoption by country parishes of small Christian farming communities "living the Christian life of prayer, sacrament and charity" with the village church at the centre of their life. The writer refers to the growing conviction of the futility of trying to live a Christian life under modern industrial conditions.

The Dick Sheppard centre at Bayswater had a record attendance to hear Eberhard C.H. Arnold speak on "Community in Action" in December. The following meeting in January was addressed by the Rev. George Gibson on "Community and the Churches", and described the evolution of a community group from a mission settlement in Camberwell.

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St. Hilda's-in-the-Fields, at Micklepage Farm, near Horsham, to which he referred, has some eight members at present in residence, and hopes to develop a full communal life as a Christian farming and producing group.

Community as a solution of the problems of refugee settlement is the subject of a new pamphlet by Professor Scott to be issued jointly by the Homecroft Association and the Community Service Committee. All interested are invited to ask for copies.

An address based on 'Community in Britain' was recently given by a member of the Engineers' Study Group to the ethical section of that body. Members of this section have volunteered their assistance in providing technical data and advice in the working out of practical problems of community organization.

A letter has been received from Nicolai Scheierman, of Sweden, whose manifesto was published in the last issue of THE PLOUGH. He sends addresses of other friends on the continent with community convictions. Mary Osborn has again visited Wessex, by invitation, and has addressed some six meetings there on community.

The regional conference of the Fellowship of Reconciliation at Salisbury on Jan. 28th devoted its afternoon session to a consideration of community, and invited a speaker from the Committee to lead the discussion.

Community articles are now appearing monthly in 'The Christian Pacifist', the new publication of the Fellowship.

Editorial Notes and Comments

With this issue we begin the second year of THE PLOUGH. Its object of combining more closely all those who are seeking and striving towards the coming order finds expression this time in a number of articles which centre round one main theme: the task of true followers of Christ for the world and mankind. It is most important to realize that deep unity of all those who live in, or are seeking in the direction of community, is only to be found in the depth of religious experience out of which unity in practical and outward matters also grows.

RELIGION IS POLITICS means that the followers of Christ are responsible with their lives and actions for the whole of public life in all its aspects, e.g. economics, international relations, etc. This task and what it involves is shown in its different consequences by our several contributors.

ERIC GILL points out clearly that love leads to poverty and both lead to peace. That is the "politics" of the Kingdom of God.

EBERHARD ARNOLD (1883-1935), in a heart-searching and challenging address delivered some time ago at a youth conference, makes clear to us the character of the true Church and its responsibility: not by compromising with the powers of evil but by setting a clear picture of the way of love in Christ does she fulfil her divine task for the salvation of mankind. This means in simple words to live according to the Sermon on the Mount, not to go to law, not to use force, to live purely, communally and simply.

ERIK ANDERSSON tells us about yet another attempt at a practical

community life in Sweden. He makes clear to us on what basis it stands. After pointing out the absolute contradiction between the powers of the world and the way of Jesus Christ, he calls to us, "Before which throne do we bow, — you and I?"

But to make such a clear witness means a fight, fought by Christ's followers with spiritual weapons only, but leading on the part of the powers of evil to the persecution, imprisonment or death of those who love even their enemies. CLAUS FELBINGER and his brother and helper Hans Leutner were both put to death after the former had made his Confession, the first section of which we are printing here,* before the authorities in Landshut. Both had been sent out by the communities of the Brothers (known as the Hutterians) in Moravia to proclaim the joyful message of peace and unity in Bavaria.

Claus Felbinger's Confession is neither apologetic nor defensive although he was facing death and maltreated almost daily during his imprisonment. It is a hard-hitting and fearless attack on the hypocritical and false Christianity of those who with their deeds served the powers of evil, yet with their mouths confessed to be Christian. Yet this attack is in no wise insulting or hateful: it is permeated with love to the persecutors who a short time afterwards killed him. It wants to convince, to convert, to show a better way. Although this confession was given nearly 400 years ago and differs very much from our modern ways of expression and style, it strikes us as being most topical and enlightening for the struggle we are facing, which is essentially the same in 1939 as in 1560. But the real clash between Christianity and the powers of evil is still ahead; there is still time to prepare ourselves.

Little need be said about our other contributions: they speak for themselves. All this seeking towards community, this brave pioneering by various groups and movements of which we hear makes one rejoice. Yet it also shows clearly the need for a deepening of the fundamental aspects of community. We hope that THE PLOUGH both in this number and in the following year will be a help and guide in this direction.

THE EDITOR

Books

HEAVEN AND EARTH by John Middleton Murry.
Jonathan Cape, 1938.

Price 10s. 6d.

THE RICH AND THE POOR: A Biblical Anthology. Compiled by
Eric Gill. *Coldwell, 1938.*

Price 1s.

J. Middleton Murry has tried in *Heaven and Earth* "to reveal the actual growth of the modern world through the minds of some great men who experienced in act or imagination the travail of its becoming". Through the eyes and experience of Chaucer, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Milton, Rousseau, Goethe, Godwin, Wordsworth, Shelley, Marx and

* This confession was copied in 1934 from an old manuscript, to be found under MS., A. 67., in the *Zentralbibliothek*, Zuerich, Switzerland.

Morris we watch the change from the greater wholeness of life of the Middle Ages to the rise of individualism in matters of religion, politics and economics, and with it the disintegration and shattering of Christendom. Of to-day he writes, "material progress must turn to man's damnation unless it is viewed in the perspective of the fundamental truth that a thousand years are but as a day in the sight of God. Man's material progress is a regression unless there is spiritual progress to support and control it." "So it is that we have to be very much on our guard against such a hypocritical little modern word as 'free'. It is a whited sepulchre, inwardly full (alas, too literally) of dead men's bones."

What then can be done? Is there a hope for the world? The answer is a challenge. All the men cited on the way to the torn and distracted state of life to-day had seen something of a vision splendid, and contradictory and different as their philosophies are — in keeping with the increasing disintegration of life — something of the one, divine truth that points the way gleams in each. Thus it is that scattered about the book one finds sentences pregnant with meaning. "Unity is born of humility, not pride. The modern world is proud, proud unto death, and perhaps it is only when it has been trodden in the mire of its own spiritual degradation and has endured a terrible and universal humiliation, that unity among men will be a reality again." "Heaven bids us be simple". "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom." "In the presence of the Absolute there must be absolution and penitence." "The world struggles ignorantly and desperately towards Christ. That, to me, is the meaning of history. Were I to read history otherwise, as I have striven to do, I should succumb to a final despair. Either Christ will triumph, or humanity is doomed." Thus it is the duty of all who see things as they are to take the side of Life and "pit themselves, in every fibre of their being, against the unconscious motion of mankind towards Death".

It was to the church that the Middle Ages owed their unity, as well as the betrayal of that unity. What of the church to-day? The call to repentance, which is for all, is very specially directed to it. "A Church is, in idea, the community of men and women who recognize an authority independent of the secular state; this is the 'ecclesia', the communion of those who are 'called out' from secular society to acknowledge that their final allegiance lies elsewhere . . . The only Church which can, or will, oppose the secular state of to-day with authority is the invisible Church, which becomes visible just in so far as any part of the visible Church subscribes to the authority, and is prepared to follow the example of Christ. If no part of it will thus subscribe in deed, the reality and authority of the Church will pass inevitably into the new 'ecclesia' of those who will subscribe indeed." One cannot pour the wine of love into a wineskin that is rent and split. "There is no unity without Christ; and without unity there is no Christ."

"The only thing that can save the world is Love. We must begin by trying to love, and by recognizing our inevitable failure to love. That is what men need: to be conscious of their own nothingness and to be renewed by the experience of the grace of God through Christ . . . and the grace of God works directly towards Christian unity." K. E. H.

The Rich and the Poor: In the light of the article by Eric Gill, in this number of THE PLOUGH, it is well to be understood that he should have felt urged to compile this little book. To quote from his prefacing note, the book "is an anthology of Biblical texts about rich and poor—all texts, that is, of a general application. It does not include all texts which bear upon social justice (though such an anthology might profitably be made). But it seemed to the compiler that many Christians, speaking of rich and poor and quoting particular texts, were certainly not aware of the Biblical evidence. This collection (made quite simply from the concordance-headings 'rich', 'riches', 'poor', 'poverty') should make it clear how often the Bible speaks of rich and poor; and in what manner it speaks of each." The book should help to remind Christendom of to-day, standing powerless before the terrible need and suffering of so many men, women and children all over the world, of the clear call of the Bible to a life of complete poverty and simplicity.

The very low price of the book probably accounts for the rather inadequate paper cover, which is scarcely of a permanent enough character to be in keeping with the value of the contents. But the book itself is a beautiful little production, set out in the 'Joanna' type designed by Eric Gill. It is beautiful to look at and clear to read, and many will be very grateful for it.

H. A.

A FURTHER CRY FOR HELP FOR REFUGEES

Every day for months past we have received letters from people in great distress of body and soul, and because we ourselves cannot guarantee the sums necessary to let these unhappy people into England we wish to ask our friends again for help.

Our Bruderhof House in Birmingham is available for housing several cases who are in particularly urgent need, but can any friends provide bank guarantees for them? The guarantee required by the Home Office involves about £1 per week for a period of two years, and in most cases an additional £150 for eventual emigration, although this may not apply to older people.

There are many for whom we would appeal, but especially at present for a forty-year-old couple with their daughter of eleven, and for two elderly bachelors. The fate of the married couple is very hard. Their seventy-year-old parents had to sell their house within three days after having lived in it for forty years, and as a result the old mother had such a nervous breakdown that she had to be taken to a home for neurotics. They themselves had their grocer's shop completely plundered in November, and received not a farthing compensation; and now they must leave their home and do not know where to go. We want to receive them at Bruderhof House.

The case of the two bachelors is also tragic. They are over fifty years of age, and have been in leading positions in great banking firms in Vienna. One is a Jew and the other a Christian and they have been inseparable friends for thirty years. Now one must leave Austria, but his friend will not let him go alone. All these years they have shared their joys and sorrows, and they beg us to help them to leave together. We have prepared a place for them also in our Bruderhof House.

Will several friends unite, and undertake each to provide a part of the guarantee sum? We beg for the most speedy help for these unfortunates, who are in despair and constant agony of soul. Will all willing to help get in touch with the Steward, The Cotswold Bruderhof, Ashton Keynes, Wilts.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND WORLD NEED

by EBERHARD ARNOLD

Price 3/-, hand-bound; 2/-, paper cover.

John Middleton Murry writes:—

This little book is a noble Christian utterance. It springs from a deep experience of this present age, and reveals the reality of the eternal Christ through a vista of contemporary suffering and perplexity. Not only is it intrinsically of a rare order of spirituality; but it has a further historical significance. It marks the re-emergence under the stress of modern tribulation, of the profound mystical and catholic strain in German Christianity which has been so great a glory of the German spirit. In reading Eberhard Arnold it is to Eckhart and Tauler and the Gottesfreunde that my mind turns again. Here is the warmth of the knowledge that is love of God: the unmistakable voice of a Christian faith for which the Incarnation is the eternal reality. And, as an Englishman, it makes me at once proud and humble to know that the Brotherhood of which Eberhard Arnold's faith has been the inspiration has sought refuge in our country.

This book is printed and bound by craftsmen of the
Cotswold Bruderhof and can be obtained through
any bookseller or direct from

THE PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE
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