

THE PLOUGH

THE QUARTERLY
OF THE
BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

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DOROTHY DAY

OAK STREET PARISH

HECTOR BLACK

BIRMINGHAM BULL RING

BUFORD TRIBBLE

SPRING 1954



THE PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE
BROMDON, BRIDGNORTH, SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND

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THE PLOUGH is the quarterly journal of the Bruderhof Communities in England and South America, a group of people of fifteen nationalities who live together in full community. Its aim is to unite more closely those who seek to live by the standards of justice, brotherhood and peace.

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Society of Brothers. Bromdon, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, England.

DER PFLUG, the German edition of THE PLOUGH, also appears quarterly.

The price of each is 10s. per annum, single copies, 2s. 9d., post free.

U.S.A. and Canada, \$2.50 per annum, 65 cents single copy, payable to:

Society of Brothers, c/o 29, Lafayette Av., Haddonfield, New Jersey.

All correspondence should be sent to:

THE PLOUGH PUBLISHING HOUSE
BROMDON, BRIDGNORTH, SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND

THE PLOUGH

The Quarterly of the Bruderhof Communities

New Series. Vol. II No. 1

Spring 1954

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE AND CHRISTIANITY

HIS ATTITUDE TO JESUS

Nietzsche kept up his attack against Christianity as long as he lived. He did attempt, in his fashion, to preserve a high regard for the person of Jesus and tried to cast most of the blame on to the apostles. But to do this he found it necessary to employ a high-handed degree of philological licence in abstracting from the historical Jesus a personality which had little in common with the original. It is true that he later abandoned his first hypothesis, according to which Jesus, finding his love unanswered, sought an early death and came to the cross with the sense that his life had been a failure. But Nietzsche's Jesus is 'the most interesting of all decadents', a 'fascinating and touching mixture of the sublime, the pathologic and the childlike', 'a child-nature regressed, as it were, into the realm of the spirit, incapable alike of either anger, reproof or self-defence'. He posits in Jesus 'a pathological susceptibility to irritation and suffering' in terms of supersensitive nervousness or even epileptoid neurosis, and thus attempts to explain what he sees as a hatred for everything real and natural, an abolition of all distance and antithesis, and an ineffectual modesty which relinquishes all claim to recognition.

This approach, which literally transforms the image of Jesus into its opposite, not only implies the ridiculous charge of the basest sort of hypocrisy against the early Christians—this species of arbitrary 'elucidation' makes Jesus himself an entirely incomprehensible problem.

Nietzsche asserts that he, with his 'liberated spirits' was the first to be able to understand Jesus' 'righteousness raised to the level of passion', 'which wages war against the Holy Lie above all others'. But then the first thing he should have realized is that such a man could never possibly have entrusted his work to those who, in Nietzsche's view, then proceeded without reserve to outdo every preceding pious lie.

The very traits of character which Nietzsche most insistently passes off as fictions have been most emphatically confirmed as historical by such radical critics as Wrede and Bousset. The sober historian concludes that Christ was consciously and sharply opposed to all half-hearted and flabby attitudes in religion and morality, to all fraudulent

or power-seeking treatment of religious matters. Nietzsche is quite right in saying that Jesus rejected the priest-instinct and the church-system, that he incited the pariahs and sinners to oppose the prevailing morality and religion. In *The Will to Power* he states this insight in the words, 'The church is precisely what Jesus preached against and taught his disciples to combat'. Therefore his disciples were right in seeing him as the 'deadly enemy of priests and theologians'. Nietzsche himself thus confirms the fact that Jesus was clearly aware of the necessity of combating this most powerful of all the forces of Judaism. His life of outspoken opposition to priests and liberals, to the devout and the libertine alike was one single energetic and determined warfare against them all, a warfare which did not relent before the knife of the assassin and the cross of the executioner.

It was much truer of Jesus than of the author of *Ecce Homo* that 'when he attacked, any special consideration of persons was out of the question'. Love for all was the fundamental trait of his character, so much so that there was not a moment when he could deny this love even to those who nailed him to the cross. But this was not the love of a weakling who was afraid of pain nor the last avenue of life open to a hypersensitive soul. Jesus demonstrated an unparalleled readiness and courage to suffer and die, an unparalleled power to resist all others and to accept the pain they caused him. Jesus possessed in the highest degree that love of which Nietzsche rightly says that a man must stand firmly grounded upon himself to be able to exercise it, love as a dispensing out of inexhaustible wealth, love out of an abundance of strength. This saving love was love in action, in manly and effective help, the same love practised in a weaker form by every noble physician, the love which a good teacher tries to realize on clear principles. But it never concealed from Jesus the things which separated him from other men. It did not remove the distance of this separation, but emphatically increased it through the reckless and impartial attack of its truthfulness. Because this love grew out of inner strength and truth there were many times when the only expression open to it was a cutting anger against evil and baseness. Jesus struck outspoken and accurate blows at the terrible evils he saw around him. No one has ever equalled him in the way he depicted sin as the terrible root of all decadence and as the power which sets distance between God and man.

But his glad message of the abolition and destruction of sin was just as clearly presented. This very point was the apex of his tremendous claim that only in his person was it possible to overcome this fearful power and to bridge the terrifying gulf. And the faith he proclaimed and demanded for this overcoming did not consist in dogma or emotion. What he brought and required was the action of a man's whole being, a relationship of person to person. He had spent everything for the

sake of each individual, and now he expected each individual to make a radical and unequivocal decision for him and him alone. Just as he could and had to act as he did—by instinct, Nietzsche says—so everyone who loses himself to him receives a new ability to live as he did, and if need be, to die as he did. Just as this 'holy anarchist' was put to death as a criminal 'for his guilt' in the eyes of the devout, the truth and vitality of his assertions have been shown by the fact that the few in all times since who have really taken the same practical course as he, have been persecuted with the same fanatical hatred.

Jesus was so far from abolishing all distance that one of the key elements of his thought was the necessity of stirring into open battle the tremendous antithesis, the irreparable fissure between the few who were ready to live entirely for God and in uninterrupted relationship to Jesus, and the mass of half-men sunk in religiosity and godlessness. Those whom Jesus would recognize as Christians should never dare to go into this battle armed either with bullets and bayonets or with lawsuit and legal dispute. And still, Christ had more right than any other man to declare as he did that he had not come to bring peace but a sword. In the devastating sharpness with which he condemned the bottomless hypocrisy of the pious elements and in hanging damnation even over the heads of those of his followers who were the mightiest in the spirit if their actions did not carry out his words, he actually created antitheses and made chasms which were well suited to fan the hatred of those he condemned to the white heat of fanaticism. He could never simply have declared that all men are children of God; he summoned everyone without distinction to be converted to God out of the dominion of the devil. The Sermon on the Mount and the gospel of John alone should suffice to prove to everyone who thinks, that Jesus Christ's war against the religious classes was as blunt and harsh as was the antichristian religious spirit of Nietzsche. Just as much as the religion of the 'dear God', in which everyone is God's child, Nietzsche's religious self-exaltation was diametrically opposed to the teaching of Jesus that only those few can come to the Father who have turned entirely and consistently to his son.

Whoever has the courage of Christ to give plain testimony in words and action to this radical view of things, in the face of all religiosity and godlessness, has thus taken up a sword that cuts deeper than bone and marrow; he has thrown down a gauntlet which will leave him no rest from any quarter from then onwards; he has gone on a campaign which he will be able to carry to conclusion in one case only—if he is ready to follow his chief to the last extremity.

That Jesus could undertake such a profound and shattering upheaval of all things in good conscience was possible only because he was filled by a conviction and a claim which must be described as

limitless. Jesus' incredible awareness of his importance, beside which the superlatively inflated presumptions of Nietzsche fade away like the dreams of a child, can only be explained on the assumption that Jesus was entirely filled by the unique religious and historical rôle which, according to the report of his disciples, he in fact claimed for himself. Only if he had really felt that he was prophet and Messiah could he so sharply have summoned the religion of the most highly regarded of the pious to give an account of itself to him. Only if he had known that he was the son of God and the judge of the world could he have accepted the death sentence for this testimony with such serene assurance. Only if he had regarded himself as the only possibility for the saving of men could he have spoken the sharp words which Nietzsche, from the viewpoint of his false premise, asserts are fictitious. Only if he had really believed that his influence would determine the course of the world could he have made with such unerring assurance the easily-tested promise that the material needs of his followers would be supplied. Only if he had reckoned with his personal return as a certainty could he have encouraged such confidence of victory and such positive expectation in his disciples.

The total inner attitude of Jesus, through which all the problems of his personality are solved at one stroke, can only be understood if we grasp in all its implications its most natural factor, a factor which Nietzsche clearly called attention to. Jesus was entirely rooted in the earth of the Jewish history of revelation. It was not this which he rejected, but its adulteration by the priestly greed for power of the Jewish orthodoxy and the theological liberals. But, instead of trying to understand the clearly defined image of Jesus in terms of the historical framework in which he grew up and died, Nietzsche, like many others, attempted to interpret the principles of Jesus' nature in terms of his own religious and philosophical development. The mighty claim of Jesus can be seen in its precise setting only in the context of the Old Testament writing from which alone it could have arisen. Unless we grasp the peculiar relationship of this unique personality to the Old Testament on the one hand and to the inner circle of the disciples on the other, we can never possibly do the least justice to its nature.

It is a complete contradiction of this personality to suppose that he whose words were never to pass away, who would rather have seen heaven and earth dissolved than that the smallest fraction of his words or those of the law and the prophets be lost—that this most spiritual of all proponents of the letter 'set as his premise that no word was to be taken literally'. What made his demands and demarcations so peculiarly exacting was the fact that he required unconditional subjection to every one of these words and refused any follower who would not comply. The sole content of his followers' action—and Nietzsche

also emphasized this as the key point of Christian life—was that through total dedication to his person in terms of what he said and did, through unconditional trust in his promises, they were to live in the obedience of faith. In this sense it was imperative for the true life to begin here and now, but in the power of the certain expectation of another and equally real life. It is true that Jesus placed the greatest value on man's spiritual life, but never without clear reference to his whole existence, including its physical aspect, and to the totality of the 'real' world around him. Just as all he said was expressed in concepts like 'God', 'kingdom', 'the son of God', and 'return', which were clearly understood by the Jews, in the same way everything in nature, space and time was the solidest reality for him. His conception of marriage, so misunderstood by Nietzsche, according to which a couple are regarded as divorced already in case of adultery, since the two are one flesh, is an earnest proof of his sense for reality. In the same way what he said about obligations to the government, or about the beauty and majesty of nature, as well as his constant aid to the sick and hungry, show how wrong Nietzsche was to deny him any sense for reality.

Since the strongest proof of Jesus' affirmation of reality, his material and earthly hope for the future, will be compared with Nietzsche's chief accusation later on, the only thing left to mention is the kingly dignity and vigorous assurance with which he faced every malicious jibe, every cruel blow and the certainty of death itself. This excludes all possibility of explaining his unprecedented consciousness of himself as nervous pathology or naïveté. The confident courage with which Jesus, without the least excitement, as Nietzsche himself said, 'did not avoid the final crisis, but actually precipitated it'; the joyful affirmation of life with which he constantly referred to the prospect of his bodily return; the simple and natural manner of his life and his words—all this should be sufficient to convince anyone permanently that what we have here is not an impotent decadent nor a 'case of spiritualized infantilism', but the 'son of man', the super-man in essence: man as he ought to be in his manly strength and unblemished purity.

The most remarkable thing is that the 'Antichrist' recognized all this in Jesus when he outlined the essential characteristics of healthy humanity—of the 'super-man'. Nietzsche calls Jesus 'righteousness raised to the pitch of instinct and passion'. He depicts him as the antagonist of degenerate instinct who waged war on 'personal vain-glory', on 'the holy lie' and on the 'church hierarchy' as the 'holy anarchist' with an 'assault on priests and theologians'. And, finally, we hear from the mouth of the 'Antichrist' the most trenchant truth of all about the only super-man known to history: 'Jesus set up a real life, a life in the truth, in contrast to that ordinary life'.

To be concluded in the next number.

EBERHARD ARNOLD.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF KÄTHE KOLLWITZ

MARGRET BÖNING

In Spring, 1943, an acquaintance told me that Frau Kollwitz, who was at the time old and ill, was living alone in Berlin. This thought left me no peace. Since my childhood her name had been familiar to me through her art, and I decided to write, making the suggestion that I should look after her. This would mean she would have to move to Nordhausen, where I lived. I hoped, also, that our companionship would enrich my own work. She replied at once, saying she was too old to travel and did not want to leave the house where she and her husband, a socialist doctor, had lived together for fifty years. We began to correspond, and she gave me a cordial invitation to visit her and talk over those things which we could not write about on account of the Gestapo.

The 8th July was her birthday and on the 5th I travelled to Berlin. I telephoned before going to her house, and was answered by a deep, friendly voice bidding me come as quickly as possible. She lived in North Berlin in a poor district. I had to climb four stories before finding a modest door-plate bearing her name. She opened the door herself, and I felt as if I had known her for a long time. Her snow-white hair and shining eyes were the first things that struck me, and then I noticed the deep lines that life had written on her clearly-defined features, which I shall never forget. I was deeply affected to meet this woman who had portrayed the spiritual and physical suffering of men in innumerable, powerful drawings. Frau Kollwitz, a small, homely figure, walking slowly with the help of a stick, led the way and opened the door to her combined work-and-living room. It was extremely simple, without curtains or carpets, and almost gave the appearance of poverty. In a corner under the window stood the writing desk her husband had always used during his lifetime. In the centre was a plain table, and against one wall stood a sofa. The only other objects in the room were a number of models, covered with cloths.

Immediately we got into a deep conversation. We were concerned with the suffering which was becoming almost unbearable for so many people. We spoke of the terrible time in which we were living, of the war in which she had lost a grandson, and the hopelessness of the whole situation. This led us back to the First World War, when she lost her 18-year-old son, Peter, and finally we sat in helpless silence before the photographs of this beloved boy and her husband. What more was there to say? What was the answer to all this—where the help? At that time I did not know.

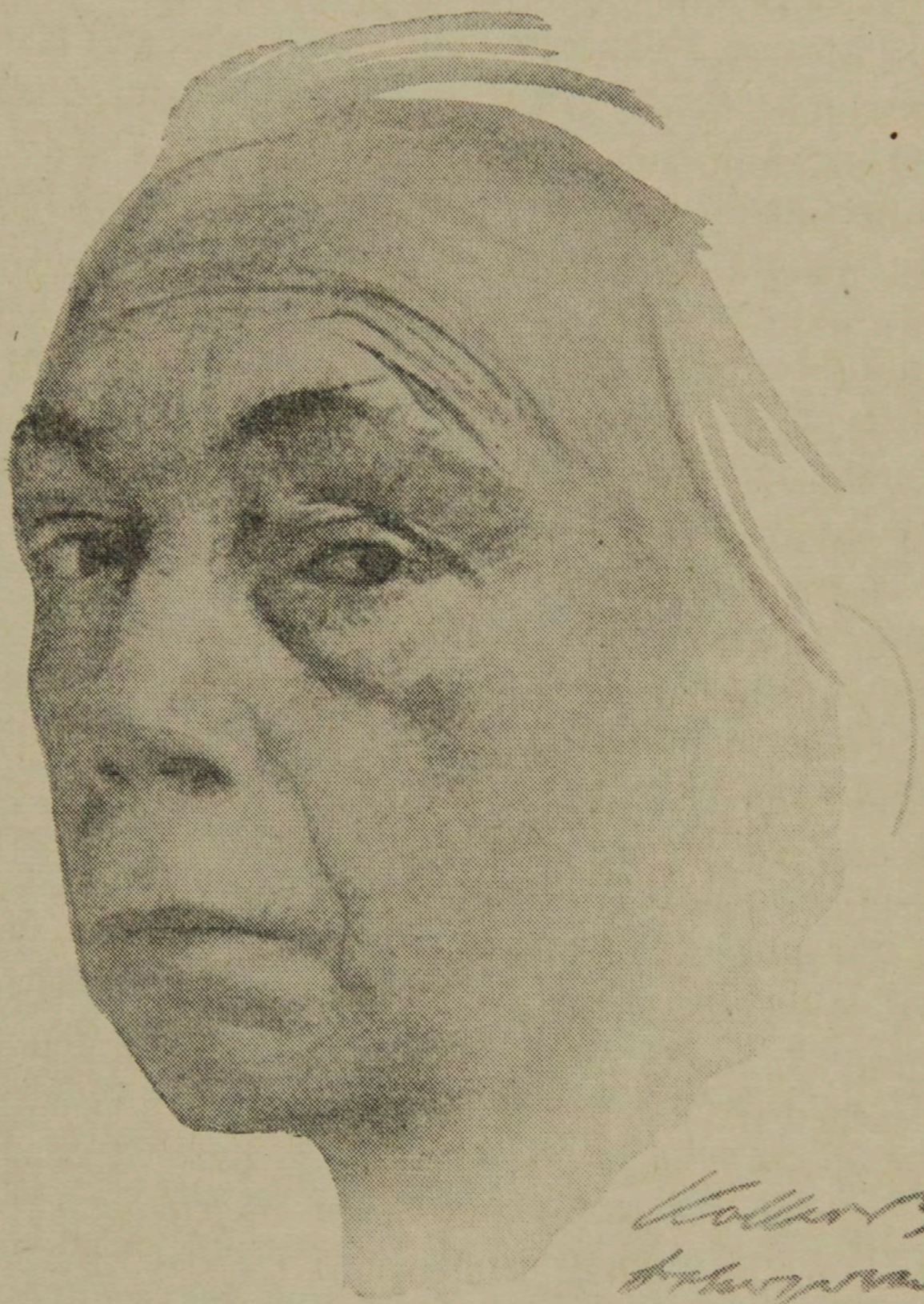
As a young girl, Käthe Kollwitz was enthusiastic about the socialistic conception of the brotherhood of all mankind, at a time when it

was considered a crime to be a socialist. Her loving, sympathetic heart could not be quiet; her eyes, searching for justice, could not ignore men's misery. She felt called to seek for a solution—this was the origin of her illustrations for the revolutionary play of Gerhard Hauptmann, *The Weavers*, and also her series of drawings of the Peasants' War and the French Revolution. These works were indeed a deep challenge to fellow human beings to have pity on those who suffer under social injustice. Then came the World War, and Käthe Kollwitz herself experienced the suffering of separation and death when her youngest son was killed.

She showed me her works, including models which few people had seen because at that time she could not exhibit them publicly; each one indicated a protest against war. There was a gigantic life-study of a mother bending protectively over her two children. Another model was of mothers trying to save their children from attack. A third was a group of women and their children at a leave-taking. The most moving of all was a mother sitting and mourning over her young son, lying naked and lifeless between her knees. All the models had originated from a deep and genuine sympathy with suffering humanity, but one realised from them, too, how much their creator had endured herself.

I went home greatly impressed by all I had seen. But my anxiety for Käthe Kollwitz herself left me no peace, for the air attacks on Berlin got steadily worse. We heard that the foreign radio had announced that Berlin would be completely destroyed by the end of August. I kept on pressing Frau Kollwitz to leave Berlin, but she did not wish to save herself while her nurse, her sister and her niece remained in danger. So I decided to invite all four of them, and they actually came to live with me in Nordhausen at the beginning of August.

We soon became a small, closely-knit community. Frau Kollwitz was 'Mother Käthe' to me and 'Granny' to my children. I was constantly touched by the modesty of these people, who sought to compensate me in various ways. Frau Kollwitz' sister taught my children and sometimes relieved me of domestic duties so that I might sculpture. Frau Kollwitz even offered herself as a model, and she encouraged me in my work by her warm interest. I shall never forget the evenings when we looked at art folios together, or read Goethe, or when she recounted incidents from her life. At such times she forgot herself completely. She spoke of her student days at Munich and her years of work for the well-known periodical, *Simplizissimus*. She told of a tramping holiday from Florence to Rome with a friend, of her art studies in Paris and her acquaintance with Rodin, Corinth, Liebermann and Zille. She made no distinctions between men, but encountered them all with a warm, loving heart. For instance, she had a friendship with a young workman to whom she was like a mother. During the war she



Koller B.
1945

SELF PORTRAIT

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wrote to him when he was on active service. Then, while he was a soldier on the Russian front, he made and embroidered slippers for her, and when he was killed she wept for him as for her own son.

Meanwhile, I went several times to Berlin to rescue some of her works. We looked through the cupboard where her drawings were stored and were deeply moved to see that often she had sketched a line or a hand twenty times before she felt it to be right. Unfortunately, we could not save everything.

Our peaceful life in Nordhausen was short-lived. We received terrible letters; Hamburg was burning; artist friends had lost everything, and described horrible scenes. Anxiety for her son who lived in a Berlin suburb made Frau Kollwitz very uneasy. At the end of November she received the first heavy blow—the house in Berlin, where she had spent fifty years, was burnt to the ground. Eight days later, her son lost everything. Reports arrived about Jewish friends who were forced to hide to avoid being taken away to extermination camps. With these emotional disturbances, and with heart attacks and asthma, Frau Kollwitz hardly survived the winter. She retired more and more to her room, suffering from increasing deafness and constant eye-trouble. She could walk only with great difficulty and went about with the aid of two sticks. It made us very sad indeed to see her in such suffering. She longed for death, for her life had become a torment. In spring and summer she sat in the sunshine in a large armchair. One had the feeling that already she was no longer living on the earth. Then I was able to watch the wonderful spiritualised beauty of her countenance and had a great desire to perpetuate in plastic form this goodness, this elemental motherhood, which encompassed all earthly grief, yet reached out to the eternal.

Frau Kollwitz could find no peace to die, even in Nordhausen, which was endangered by air attacks. So in August 1944 she moved into a little house in Moritzburg, near Dresden. I shall never forget how I stood by her bedside for the last time. We both wept at this parting, for we felt it would be our last. From Moritzburg I received only short, loving greetings, written in a trembling hand. At the end of April 1945, she died. She did not experience the awful destruction of Nordhausen.

I would be most unjust to regard Käthe Kollwitz as a political propagandist; unfortunately, her name was often mentioned in connection with politics. Her search went much deeper, and linked her to all truly seeking men. She sought redemption. At one time after the First World War she wrote: "After the heavy oppression of the war years, after the complete collapse of the old order, after Germany stood at last naked, new, still without impress or stamp, one expected everything. Something bold! Something completely new! One's whole

longing was for truth, brotherliness and wisdom. Those were days of revolution! But what has come into being looks very different from what we had dreamed. The child is no prodigy; it is very like its parents. The old deception, the old hate, the old idea of pitting force against force remain."

In these words there is no longing for political reform, for a change of system, but the old yearning cry for the redemption of the whole of mankind; the longing for the reshaping and renewing of all things; for a world order based on true love. If one looks carefully through Käthe Kollwitz' pictures, one suddenly comes across works which stand out from her usual style and strike one by their completely different atmosphere. Here I am thinking of 'A Young Woman Praying', 'Waiting', or the gravestone which she made for her family. This latter is a bas-relief: a tired human head rests in God's hands. The head bears an unmistakable likeness to her own features, as is so often the case with her drawings. These quiet works seem to me the most fundamental, for they express what really lies behind her whole work: the longing for peace, the real peace which can only be God's peace. Was it her fault that she could no longer hear the one who proclaims a kingdom of peace, who is the greatest herald of the transformation of all things, Jesus of Nazareth, and that he was for her neither reality nor way? Who does hear him among all the confusion and degeneracy of mankind and of Christianity? And even if we do still hear his clear message in the old accustomed form, where is it lived? Where do men bear a living witness to his message, following it in all its consequences? Where is true fellowship, created by his Spirit?

In 1950, after terrible war experiences, I came with my two children to the Bruderhof and found community and true brotherhood. Since then I have often thought of Käthe Kollwitz and felt that what we have found here would have corresponded with what she also was seeking.

JESUS AS ARTIST

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Jesus alone among all the philosophers and sages affirmed as his principal teaching an eternal life, the endlessness of time, the nothingness of death and the necessity and importance of truth and complete devotion. He lived unerringly as an artist, a greater artist than any, scorning marble, clay and palette, for he worked in living flesh. That is to say, this incredible artist, not to be understood by the clumsy instrument of our modern, nervous, disordered brain, did not make statues or pictures or even books—he says so explicitly—instead he created real, living, immortal men.

That is significant, especially as it is the truth.

This great artist, then, wrote not a single book either. Undoubtedly Christian literature as a whole would disgust him. For how rare in Christian literature are there products which can compare favourably with the gospel of Luke and the epistles of Paul, works so simple in their austere and martial form. Yet although the great artist Jesus rejected putting his ideas and feelings into books, he certainly did not despise the spoken word, chiefly the parable. (What strength there is in the stories of the sower, the harvest, the fig tree!) And who of us would dare to say that he lied when he prophesied with scorn the destruction of what Rome had built, asserting at the same time: Though heaven and earth shall pass away, yet my words shall not pass away.

These words, which because he was so great he did not even consider necessary to put into writing, mark the highest pinnacle ever reached by art, and that pure height gives them creative power—sublime creative power.

Such considerations take us very far, in fact raise us above art. They give us an insight into the art of moulding life and being immortal while we are still alive.

QUICKEN the seed
In the dark, damp earth;
Nourish our need—
God of all birth.

Thou art the seed
That we bury now;
Thou art our need—
God of the plough.

Bury the spark
Of our own desire,
Deep in the dark—
God of the fire.

After the night,
When the fight is won,
Thou are the light—
God of the sun.

PHILIP BRITTS.

THE CATHOLIC WORKER MOVEMENT

DOROTHY DAY

'This is not just a monthly paper but a movement,' Peter Maurin used to say, and that is what it became in these last twenty years. And it was what Peter intended. When I first met him, I was thinking only in terms of writing, and my vision was limited indeed. I had always been interested in labour, but not in any land movement, since I was born and bred in cities. Peter's emphasis on fields as well as factories and workshops amazed me. He gave me first of all, on our meeting, an article on St. Francis to read, by one of the popes, and then Kropotkin's book.

He had a very simple programme, a paper, round table discussions for the clarification of thought, houses of hospitality, and agronomic universities. We have often been accused of distorting his programme, and by *we* I mean those of us who were attracted to work together and assumed responsibility; and perhaps there is some basis for this accusation. Peter Maurin was a Frenchman and a theorist and he quoted Lenin to the effect that there could be no revolution without a theory of revolution. He wanted men to think before plunging into action.

He had grown up on the land, in a small village in France, one of a family of 23 children. His own mother had died when he was nine and his father had married again. Many of his brothers and sisters entered religion and became teachers, and one of his brothers is to this day head of a Christian Brothers school outside Paris. Peter taught there too, and in 1909 at the time of the dissolution of the religious orders in France, he emigrated to Canada. He had thought at first of giving up teaching for farming, but an accident to a partner turned him to drifting around the country, working as an itinerant labourer. He came to New York state with a lumber gang and stayed in the United States thereafter, working through the midwest and the eastern states at many jobs, on railroad gangs, in steel mills, brickworks, and in the cities, as porter and janitor.

Seven years before I met him he landed in a boys' camp at Mt. Tremper, New York, where he stayed for seven years, mending roads, cutting ice in winter, caring for an old horse, living on bread and vegetable soup and studying constantly, reading history, sociology, economics, working out what he called a synthesis of 'cult, culture and cultivation'.

He was a great teacher, and we learned much from him. He used to come to New York in the winter, to social action conferences, or just to converse with the man in the street. He was not afraid of using clichés. Indeed he brought them to life again. He said, 'If you wish to reach the man in the street, you go to the man in the street', and that

meant that Peter set up a class room in the middle of Union Square, or on a park bench, or bus or at a table in a restaurant. When he dealt with the problem of unemployment, he used such slogans as, 'work not wages', 'abolition of the wage system', 'work is a gift, not a commodity', 'fire the bosses'. He used these expressions to attract attention, and then he held forth on self-organization, self-employment, the personalist and the communitarian revolution.

He came to me because he had read articles I had written for Catholic papers, and also because George Shuster, present president of Hunter College, New York, referred him to me. He used to visit great men with the simplicity of a Gandhi or a Bhave and it is a measure of the greatness of these men that they used to receive him and listen to him. Presidents of colleges, theologians, politicians, investment men on Wall Street, these were some of his contacts. I have no doubt he changed their lives.

His insistence that I start here and now, with whatever materials were at hand, with the faith of the saints, and following the examples of the saints, was the lever that pushed me into action. We started indeed at my kitchen table to write articles for the paper, and the office was a sitting room which was soon divested of furniture. He insisted that if your brother came to you for clothes, furniture or bread, he should be given what was at hand, whether or not it deprived you. Indeed, 'the works of mercy should be done at a personal sacrifice', he assured everyone. God always restored a hundredfold.

It is this bounty of God that has kept us going these last twenty years. Living in New York has meant that our house has become a house of hospitality. Peter meant I am sure the parishes and bishoprics were the ones to run houses, not editors. But he also emphasized the *personal* practice of charity, as the immediate way to solve problems of unemployment and destitution, so we have always been kept busy. Our present headquarters is at 223 Chrystie Street, on the lower east side. We have lived in four places since we began twenty years ago. We have two breadlines a day, from six to seven in the morning and in the afternoon from 1 till two-thirty. The line extends two-deep half way down the block. As far as I can see under our present industrial system which makes for poverty and war and irresponsibility, and our educational system which teaches no philosophy of work, these breadlines will continue.

Our house is as much like a community as possible, with an atmosphere of home. One person is in charge, like the father of the family, and he does what he can to urge, entreat, rebuke, as well as console and comfort. Another is in charge of the kitchen, another of the clothes room, another of the file room and the mailing list, and people are not particularly 'put' in charge, as grow into it. They volunteer, they

help, they prove themselves in charge. The one who is the servant is the leader, in other words. We have meetings and discussions, and a library, but it is a home rather than an institution. Also, we are not incorporated because we are trying always to stress the idea of personal responsibility rather than collective responsibility. One makes for the other. We go to mass and communion daily, individually in one or another of the nearby churches. We also pray the rosary together at noon in our general room.

As for agronomic universities, we did start what we called farming communes throughout the country, 'where the worker could become a scholar and the scholar a worker'. Peter Maurin used to point to such communities as those of the Zionists and the Bruderhof as the solution for the ills of this life.

Our Catholic Worker farms, such as St. Benedicts at Upton, Massachusetts, are for families; Maryfarm is a retreat house at Newburgh, New York; Peter Maurin Farm, a rest house at Pleasant Plains, Staten Island; St. Benedict's Farm, South Lyons, Michigan, has three families; and there are other beginnings in New Jersey, Missouri, Ohio, California and other states. There are about ten houses of hospitality in the United States now and two in London, England.

At all our houses and farms there is a great deal of coming and going. Students come to volunteer their work for six months or a year; people come from the breadline, from hospitals, from the streets, sent to us often by the police department, or Bellevue Hospital or some other agency. We find ourselves with what more often looks like refugee camps of victims of the class war, than growing communities. We feel like pilgrims who have here no lasting city, and yet convinced that God intended us to have a more beautiful, orderly and peaceful life than we do in this world, as a preparation for life in the next.

It does seem to me that America being what it is, the most prosperous country in the world to-day, with what they call full employment, and our educational system being what it is, there is not much chance of starting communities on the land such as Peter Maurin envisioned. People may one day be driven to the land by the atom bomb, and they will be unable to feed, clothe or shelter themselves. Those who have any skills will have the burden thrust upon them to provide for and to teach others. Unemployment will merely drive people to the state for a dole, and keep them in the cities.

Peter used to hold up saints for our emulation and admiration: he spoke of the prophets of Israel, the fathers of the Church; of St. Benedict and his theology of work, his school of God's service; of St. Dominic and his search for truth, of St. Francis and his poverty and personal responsibility and freedom; St. Philip Neri and his gaiety; of St. Vincent de Paul and his work for the poor.

I think Peter realized pretty well the problems of the day, how deep-seated they were, and how much and how little we would be able to accomplish. We were 'to make the kind of society where it was easier for people to be good', he said simply. Knowing how difficult it was going to be, I think he leaned most to St. Francis for help. That is why the Catholic Worker emphasizes over and over, voluntary poverty as the beginning of the new life for the whole man.

This is not to build upon sand but to dig down to the rock, which is Christ.

OAK STREET PARISH

HECTOR BLACK

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he hath anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4, 18-19

This was one of the favourite readings of our group ministry working in an area of poverty and desperation in the city of New Haven, U.S.A.

In Oak Street Christian Parish an attempt is made on the part of socially-conscious Christians to reach the working people in a large industrial centre of the United States. At present there are three such attempts being made, the largest in New York City among the Puerto Ricans and Negroes of Harlem, another in Chicago and the group of which I was a member in New Haven. Our group was the smallest of the three and was the most unstable financially (at times there were no salaries for several months) and had more of an inclination toward voluntary poverty than the others.

The area where we worked and lived was a neighbourhood of some ten city blocks where 2,000 people lived, two-thirds of whom were negro. The area was only three blocks from the centre of the city of 163,000 and was the ground where the first settlers of New Haven built their homes. As the population grew with incoming peoples from Europe, the original settlers of the city moved farther from the centre and left the houses for the new immigrants. Finally at the end of the 19th and early 20th century most of the existent houses were built. They were planned for poor immigrant groups—tenements of cold-water flats with public toilets in the hallways, or older buildings patched up a bit. Some of them have never had electricity installed and the tenants use gas or kerosene light. Most are heavily infested with rats so that all food must be kept in tins, and roaches are a continual

problem. The plaster falls from a ceiling, occasionally causing serious injury. The hall toilets are often stopped up and leak from floor to floor, and hallways have been left unpainted for many years. Floors are weak and stairways unsafe. Fires break out fairly often as a result of the unsafe kerosene burners that heat the apartments. People are jammed together in this area and sometimes seven people must live in one room, eat, sleep, wash, cook—all must be done in cramped quarters and the rent is often exorbitant for such rooms. Negroes and 'undesirable' whites are not wanted in other neighbourhoods, where for the same or slightly higher rents pleasant apartments are to be found. The financial insecurity of the working classes makes risky the payment of instalments towards ownership of a house in those few areas where they may be permitted to live. As a consequence these people are exploited by landlords and unable to leave the area. They often become despondent, and fall into the neighbourhood pattern of heavy drinking, gambling, promiscuity and violence.

The main purpose of our group on moving into this neighbourhood was to try to show God's love to them and, through awakening the members of the area to the call of God in Christ, help to redeem the whole neighbourhood. Our method was personal conversation with people, work with groups of adults and children in religious instruction and recreation, and the organization of a church to serve the area. We also tried to bring a feeling of community into the area by having folk dances, festivals and movies for all the people, and by calling our neighbourhood a parish.

Those of us most closely involved in the work took rooms in the area, attempting to become one with our neighbours. We had many painful lessons to learn. Being one in Christ is a relatively simple concept but a difficult practice. Love can be a hard master and our failures were many.

Despite moments when we as a staff felt real unity in Christ, and moments when we felt really at one with our neighbours, we were in reality separated, we were not the community of believers. One of the reasons for this separation was private property. This was particularly a cause of separation between ourselves and our neighbours. We were brethren in church, but a line was drawn. We could leave the neighbourhood at any time. We had families who could help us out when in financial trouble, and our brotherhood did not extend to the point where we could also share these privileges with those who chose to follow Christ with us.

As we lived among our people, telling them of God's love, of the promises of forgiveness, telling them that Jesus came into the world, not to condemn but to save and to reconcile, many echoes of our Bible readings, such as the one we have just quoted, took hold of us. These

people were indeed 'the poor' and among them we often experienced loving deeds that made pale shadows of our love.

An elderly man and his blind and deaf wife lived in a gloomy basement apartment. They were very poor, living on a small government pension. I met this man one day as I was visiting an old negro woman who lived in one of the brothels. The old woman was exploited on all sides. Her landlord, the butcher down-stairs, took her monthly government check of \$65, paid her room rent of \$11, and only gave her occasional scraps of meat and bones for the rest, saying that people were running up bills in her name at the liquor store next door, which was true. 'If I don't take her money, some one else will', was his attitude. She was threatened by some people in the building and so allowed them to use her apartment for prostitution. The apartment was a black hole. After climbing a rickety wooden staircase with gaping holes in the plaster walls, I arrived at her door, which was splintered and patched after many police raids and battles among the tenants. The bolt was slipped from the inside and a dingy kerosene lamp gradually exposed a grease-caked stove, two broken chairs, a stopped-up sink, two drunken men on the floor and the old woman in rags with a running sore on her neck, looking at me as though I were about to strike her. We walked to the bedroom to talk and found that she had only a few pillows spilling feathers on the floor, no mattress, and some poor rags at the foot to cover her. The stench of wine and decay was overpowering. As we talked, the old man from the basement apartment appeared, silently put some fish on the stove and left, neither expecting nor receiving thanks for this loving sacrifice (which laid such heavy judgment on our giving from our surplus and our giving to avoid income tax). The old woman praised God when she saw the fish and thanked him for taking care of her.

These people are not the proud, the comfortable, the self-satisfied, those who feel that they are doing enough. They would say with Peter, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'.

The futility, insecurity, loneliness and desperation which were so much a part of our neighbours' lives found expression in alcoholism, physical violence, promiscuity and gambling. But these, which seemed the epitome of evil to our bourgeois morality, now seem if anything less evil than the pride and self-righteous indifference of most of our church-attending Christians. Our people often suffered agonies of remorse, of despair, of loneliness and emptiness. Will the street woman who had to end her loneliness be cast into outer darkness while the church-goer, indifferent to his responsibility for suffering fellow-men, attains salvation? And what of ourselves who are part of a society that reduces people to such desperation? Shall we go unjudged? The voices of our captives cry out against us, against those who separate them,

make them live apart in slums and judge them as incompetent, lazy, weak.

I have no doubt that God was guiding our effort at that time, and I am sure he was to be found in our church. But suppose an alcoholic or prostitute felt God's presence in our chapel—what then? They usually went back afterwards to the same environment they came from—perhaps we had a meal together before they went back. Was this all that Christ asked of us? Was this brotherhood?

In our zeal for the reform of society we must remember that Christ did nothing in the way of writing petitions, organizing social work or influencing legislation. He did not attempt to reform society from within, but built a kingdom which was 'not of this world'. He and his followers were members of this kingdom, in the world but not of it. He invited men to follow a new way of life and to break with the old. He knew too well the temptation of the power of possessions, and the power of position and station, to allow his followers in any way to partake of this power of mammon. The national state bases its very existence on the right of private property, the power of possession and the power of position. The very root of our society thus lies in mammonism. The efforts of our group were expended on the evil fruit without affecting the basic cause of the evil. So that one might say that for every person who stopped drinking there was at least one more who started because the pressure of the environment remained unchanged. What we needed was a new society based upon love, not upon possession and power. The fruits of such a society are peace, harmony, unity, joy and faithfulness.

I left the group in New Haven because of these reasons which have become increasingly clear to me during the time I have spent at the Bruderhof. My decision to remain in the Bruderhof is the result of the call of God to a new way of life. While it is difficult to think of my friends and brothers still captives in the slums of New Haven, I cannot but feel that one day they must have the same opportunity to choose as I have had. By placing all my strength at the service of community here, perhaps it will be possible for one more person to leave Paraguay to begin a Bruderhof in the United States, where it would be easier for them to visit. Yet the tension will always exist when one sees or hears of poverty and suffering and sees the fullness of life and the joy that can be given to men. The only answer to this tension is that we are not living this life for ourselves alone, but in the hope that others may see the light and follow it. Brothers are continually going forth to make known the good news, and in whatever ways we can, we minister to the needs of our neighbouring Paraguayans. The call to a new way of life and a radical break with the present social order is being felt by men in Africa, Asia, North and South America and

Europe. The news of a way of complete brotherhood must be proclaimed. The gifts of all who come are needed, that in the strength of the Spirit and in the strength of the new growth, more men may be called to the work of God's kingdom and find the unity and peace that all hearts long for, a unity that knows of no separation and a peace that passes understanding.

BIRMINGHAM BULL RING

BUFORD TRIBBLE

Freedom of speech is a tradition in England. Many large towns have open places, park corners or market squares where anyone may stand on a soapbox and speak publicly on any subject. Hyde Park and Tower Hill are famous in London, and the Bull Ring in Birmingham.

We have long felt the urge to speak to the man in the street. In the past, representatives of our community have spoken at conferences, universities, clubs, colleges and a great variety of indoor meetings. Yet the joyful message of a common life should be brought to the passers by in the cities, challenging them to face the crucial questions of life and, with us, to seek a practical solution. Last year, therefore, we took the opportunity presented by the open-air speaking places to hold meetings in some of the larger cities in England. People in London, Birmingham, Nottingham and Plymouth have heard what perhaps they have never heard before: that in this world of strife a life of unity, love and peace is a possibility for man, and not only a possibility, but an actuality.

We are not trying to start a mass movement—it is only the few who respond to the *absolute* challenge of Jesus to give up everything and follow him. Nevertheless, love to our fellow man urges us to point a way out of the present chaos. If men are complacent and satisfied the idea of a total commitment to a brotherly way of life is meaningless. But for the sake of those who are open and seeking we wish to speak wherever we can find an audience.

The most frequent scene of our open-air meetings is the Bull Ring in Birmingham where sometimes as many as one hundred men and women from all walks of life stand and listen. Often there is only a small group—we seldom get a very large audience, probably because we do not want to enter into the sphere of religious and philosophical argument. Rather, we seek to give the direct message of Jesus, his call to a radical, new way of life. We picture for men and women the disjointed, frustrated, scrambling world as they themselves know it, and set against this the picture of the world as it could be. We say that we represent an actual, existent community, only thirty-eight miles away.

Soon the questions come, as many, struck by the fact of real community, seek to grasp it. The world's ideologies and religious beliefs—or disbeliefs—of every shade are represented by the questioners, and the answers given are listened to attentively. These meetings reveal what people are thinking in these post-war years. Nowadays one seldom hears about the old hopes and ideals of political socialism and communism. The questions are either strictly religious or they spring from various forms of scepticism regarding the intractability of human nature and the apparent impossibility of community among men. Such questions usually determine the character of the talk.

There are many different approaches to community as a way of life. Some people come to it through the need of the world with its wars, tensions, starvation and injustices, and some through the longing of the individual for fellowship, while others respond to the call of Christ to serve God and to show love to one's fellowmen. The following account of part of a meeting at the Bull Ring in Birmingham is based on notes taken at an actual discussion one Sunday evening last year.

Bruderhof Speaker: "If we consider the situation to-day, what would you say is the general direction of thought? Everyone is looking for some answer. Christendom is groping for an answer. By Christendom I mean all those who regard themselves as belonging to one of the many Christian churches. To-day there are four meetings in progress on this hill. All four are religious meetings. What do you think of that? It is strange that this should be so in the Bull Ring of Birmingham. Something has changed! Some years ago, in the time between the two world wars when I spoke here in Birmingham and other towns, there used to be many political platforms, where social and economic questions were discussed. What has happened in England in the meantime? What has happened in the world since the war?"

"The need and misery of man is just as great now as then. It may be true that nowadays the working classes are better off, but the great vision and the social ideals have failed. In the past men spoke with real hope. But to-day? Isn't it so that men are disillusioned? What are people concerned with to-day? Here they are listening to religious meetings. But I want to ask you, does Christianity as we know it give the answer? Why should there be four meetings, all Christian, but all saying something different? Is it not tragic that in a world so torn and divided Christians are unable to give a witness to unity?"

Voice from the Crowd: "How are Christians to be united? Are you speaking of spiritual unity?"

Bruderhof Speaker: "Christians are called to be united in mind, in soul and in heart, with God and with one another. Christianity should be united within itself like the early Church. Practical unity is the consequence of spiritual unity. If men are spiritually united they are urged to

a common life and a sharing of all things. That is why I stand here, to tell you that this is a fact! I want to tell you that there are people striving to go this way of practical unity and brotherhood, working together and sharing all things as brothers and sisters. We are a people drawn from many different social backgrounds and nationalities, but now we work together in peace and harmony. We want to share this life with you and are ready to do this now. We challenge you to ask yourselves if you, too, should not serve this life of Christian brotherhood and help to spread the message throughout the world!"

Voice from the Crowd: "When the early Christians were dispersed why did the apostles not call them together again? We are told to go out into all the world. It requires more Christian spirit to work in a factory, for example, than to shut oneself up in a small community."

Bruderhof Speaker: "We members of the Bruderhof do not shut ourselves up in a small community. We live together on a farm because if we are going to live a communal life we have to live somewhere. But we do go out into the world to tell about this life. We are here in Birmingham tonight for this purpose. The place where we live together is not important. It is the deed that matters. There is no reason why all the people in Birmingham who want to follow Christ should not unite in sharing everything both spiritual and material. If they did this, all would be able to see that the Spirit of Christ is a power which can and does unite men. That is what Christ wants, to show the world, through the lives of his faithful followers, that God's Spirit of love does in fact overcome the world's disunity. Christ calls us to give up all selfish purposes which separate us from God and from our fellowmen, so that we may be a people united in his love. That is the meaning of community."

Younger members of the community are always eager to attend the meetings. They take an active part, either by talking to interested people in the crowd or by distributing literature. Such gatherings give them a good opportunity of hearing the questions, problems and difficulties of the man in the street. Also it gives them a further possibility of seeing life from the point of view of those who have never heard of community life, or who have never thought about it as a solution to the needs of mankind.

It is our hope that these meetings will continue to bring the community into touch with people not attached to any particular religious or political movement. Many such people find themselves isolated in facing the problems of existence in our industrial and competitive age. Already some listeners have visited the Wheathill Bruderhof and we have received a number of letters, extracts from which are printed in the Forum.

FORUM

From Käthe Kollwitz' Sister

Dear Margret,—Thank you very much for your letter and particularly for the literature. Of course, one knows it all from the gospels, but it has become so familiar that one misses the real meaning and the strength of the challenge. And the completely unconditional challenge of truthfulness has a glorious strength and clarity for which I am *very, very* thankful—for the demands had become almost an empty form! But now it is clearly proclaimed—and lived—and for this I am thankful from the bottom of my heart! If I were not burdened with my eighty-one years, I really believe I would join you—but there: I don't do it! I can only send you my good wishes—my blessings, I might say—to accompany you on your way. Just now, I often read the Epistles, and when I read there about all their difficulties, strife and weaknesses, I begin to get apprehensive about you and wonder if you will also be able to cope with everything—but the wonderfully clear words of your pamphlets say, 'Yes!' And so you have my good wishes, Margret, and the children—whose Christmas play you described so well! I believe you have chosen *very* well. My greetings to you and your Church-community. 'Grace be with you'. Your LIESE.

Birmingham Bull Ring and Tower Hill

While waiting for a bus on Sunday in Birmingham I was able to listen to one of your speakers. Although I had only a few minutes, I was very deeply impressed. . . . I also received a leaflet about your community and its work.

Until last May I was a newspaper reporter at Chesterfield. . . . For some years my wife and I have been seeking a way of life in accordance with true Christian principles, but in so many movements there is the constant dependence upon financial gain, and the members are nearly always bound to divide their religion from their work-a-day lives. Your community—judging only from what I have read—does seem to find the answer in putting all work into the category of service, eliminating the profit motive. Here is true unselfishness and a practical expression of Christian love. All success to your plans for the future—do please let me know more!

Coventry.

D.F.

Your representative who spoke yesterday lunch time at Tower Hill interested me very much in your movement. . . . I am married,

with two children, and work in a City shipping office. Both my wife and I have been filled for a long time with the urge to live a more useful life, and your movement appears to answer the prayers I have made for guidance in that respect. It is very difficult, though, to find complete satisfaction in a life which is shared between the City business area and a suburban estate, neither of which communities generally acknowledges Christianity as their standard.

London.

G.A.W.

Art and Community

. . . I am primarily interested in the expressive sharing of one's inner life. At the community I know that possessions and labour are shared. I know that outwardly there is a good spirit among you, and that you are all friends in the Quaker sense and in the secular sense.

But deep within us there is a talent that very few are permitted to develop. Very simply: it is a talent which produces works that induce *change* in our own lives and in the lives of others. The few are mistakenly called *leaders* perhaps because of their limited numbers. These few are artists, artisans, politicians, ministers, authors, scientists, etc. The talent in its many forms covers as many fields.

No environment that I know personally or through my studies facilitates this 'genius' that is in every one of us. When perverted, this talent takes the form of pride and authority. Sometimes the few become leaders and are thus lost to themselves and us. And the great perversion is selfishness and rationalised Christianity.

Does your community also reach for this talent? So far as works go I have seen the sculpture of a youth, half reclining, done by a student of Kollwitz among you. In the photographs of her other work she imitates Käthe, but in these youth studies, I see the talent coming forth. Is she one of few?

I myself am suspended in my own development, being in the armed service of the United States, serving at present as a sign painter and art-specialist. I have a great deal of freedom in the American sense, but I am enslaved not so much to violence as to authority and disciplined limitations. The conscience the army fosters is a selfish and an escapist one ('Better you than me', 'As long as I get a good time out of it').

But I wish to extend my hand in warm greeting to each of you and to your working community which I can envision in all but its spiritual ramifications. You parallel my own direction and studies in art and education of children. . . .

U.S.A.

V.L.

Stanley Fletcher replies

In your letter you speak of a talent which is deep within us, but which very few are permitted to develop, and you ask, 'Does your community also reach for this talent?'

Of course, one could answer quite simply, yes. But to answer this more fully I shall have to say something about our attitude to talent and for what purpose we think it exists. There are two aspects to the question of talent. You say that it lies deep within us and you ask, do we 'reach for this talent'? One could see in this a certain contradiction. But this is resolved when one considers the two aspects of talent. First, there is the talent itself, and secondly, the motivating force behind the talent. I think that everyone has, more or less, a certain gift of expression—a talent. But far more important than the talent is this motivating force. You may have a very good violin, but the important thing is who plays it. It is a platitude to say that a painter, writer, or orator can use his gifts for good or evil. This platitude does, nevertheless, show that one cannot regard the development of talent (meaning here the pure gift of expression) as an end in itself. Ruskin said, 'Literature, art, science, all are fruitless, and worse than fruitless, if they do not make us capable of being glad, and glad of heart at that'. You also say that talent produces works that induce change in our own lives and in the lives of others. Obviously you mean a change for the better. You say also that the talent can be perverted. The important thing, then, is to what end it is directed. Here, immediately, we are in the realm of purpose, will and intention, in fact, all that can be meant by spirit. If we devote our gifts to the service of a spirit of love they will be well used, and will bring about a change for the better in our lives, and maybe in the lives of others. But if we devote our gifts to the service of a self-seeking and destructive spirit they will be ill-used, and will bring ruin to our own lives and to the lives of others.

We see this power of goodness, which we may call love, as the creative power behind and within all life. Yet it is not something we possess and can hold as our own. If we want to receive it we must seek for it as the greatest and highest of all gifts. By common recognition we all know that love in a man's heart can grow cold, so that his life is no longer ruled by love but by the contrary forces of self-seeking. Therefore, we must say that it is love, as the power of goodness and life, that we must seek, or, to use your words, that we must 'reach for'. Only this power can take and use our gifts to perform works that will change life.

A Letter to one of our Members

When I compare my present existence with my student days, especially the first years I studied with you at Tübingen, I must honestly admit that my life is now much more full of compromise and not so definite as at that time. I think you have taken a more consistent way, and, it seems, a less selfish one, without being guilty of self-importance or escapism. Everyone must constantly examine himself to determine the motives which lie behind his actions. I have gone the way of the 'world'—you have not. To go the way of the world means to take much suffering upon oneself. Perhaps you have been spared much. You did not personally experience the Second World War. You encountered many difficulties during your time at school and that was your way through the 'world'. It meant that, quite early in life, you had sufficient clarity to find the way to a community such as yours. The experience of National Socialism, the Second World War and confinement in an internment camp was necessary for me to become enlightened and to realise the values inherent in such a community as yours.

One constantly asks oneself whether it is necessary for a man to undergo so many painful trials to come to an understanding of what is spiritual, to find religion. As far as I can see at present, there appears to be no other way. What would Tolstoy have been without the passionate, and therefore painful, years of his early life? Can one imagine the great achievements of early medieval monks apart from the asceticism with which they mortified their flesh? Why are the terrible trials of purification carried out to-day in a way which is bound to instil such fear? Because men have forgotten the need to take hardships upon themselves, to discipline themselves. This is the only reason why the cleansing purgatory of war has to sweep over us again and again.

The churches in Germany have scarcely anything to say to men to-day—the Catholic Church perhaps has the most. No one entices us very far with humanitarian ideas. Goodness, as such, has no attraction for the modern man, and this one can say does not apply exclusively to Germany. Something must overwhelm us so much that we forget all questions and doubts. You write that your community turns very much to medieval movements. My personal opinion is that if the medieval conception of heaven and hell does not become reality again, something that is taken for granted, then there is no hope of holding back the process of secularization. You will think this is Terror, not only an earthly terror, but a supernatural one. But is it not written in the Bible: Work out your salvation with fear and trembling?

I know quite well that such a conception is not in keeping with Berdyaev's ideas, which I otherwise value highly. The nearest father to

my thought, in a spiritual sense, is probably Kierkegaard, whom I hold in great esteem. I should be very interested to know how your community regards Kierkegaard. What Berdyaev means by Personalism comes into question only for those who, for generations, have undergone a rigorous spiritual (religious) discipline, that is, for people who have developed a high standard of culture. Our age has no great culture; we are at the beginning; consequently we cannot start with something which can be achieved only after a long time.

Eutin, Germany.

DR H. R.

NEWS OF THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

It will be well known to our friends that the greater part of our community is in Paraguay, where our members live in three Bruderhof villages. In close relationship to this main body, a smaller Bruderhof at Wheathill was established in England in 1942, and, less than ten years later, a new beginning was made in Uruguay. We should like, however, to emphasise that we are *one* Brotherhood and that there is a continuous mutual help between all the Bruderhof communities. In the autumn number of *THE PLOUGH* we reported a conference which took place in Primavera and at which representatives of all the Bruderhof communities were present. At that time the decision was made to found a new settlement in North America, and last October five members from Paraguay were sent to the United States for this task. The little group was strengthened at the beginning of this year by the arrival of Will and Kathleen Marchant, Balthasar Trümpi, and, from the Wheathill Bruderhof, Guy Johnson. There is a growing understanding between our members and other community groups in North America, and we are looking forward with real hope to the new beginning together. As it is not possible at the time of writing to oversee the details of all the developments there, we hope to give a full report in a later number.

The new Bruderhof in Uruguay is growing steadily. They are now a household of thirty-three people, including ten children—members who have come from the community in Primavera and a number of guests. Our readers will be interested to know that the name chosen for this new place is *El Arado*, the Spanish for 'The Plough'. The further development of this Bruderhof is largely dependent on how quickly we can provide suitable accommodation, and for this the necessary capital must be obtained.

It will be obvious that the continued development of all our Bruderhof communities is only possible under great hardship. Our door is open to all, but we lack the necessary means to build new houses,

improve our departments of work, and provide maintenance for an ever-growing circle. We are very thankful, therefore, that in this account we are able to report some progress.

The Wheathill Bruderhof. During the past year we have had more visitors than in any previous year at Wheathill. The accommodation made available by the emigration of some of our families to Paraguay has long been filled. A great number of friends from the continent and from England are asking to visit this year so that the problem of finding adequate accommodation will be a pressing one. Therefore we should like to ask our friends to help us, either by working with us for a time or by providing funds to carry out the necessary building work. We mentioned in a previous number that a 'Holdings Company' had been formed for this purpose and we should be glad to give further details to anyone who is interested. The Wheathill Bruderhof should really be able to accommodate 250 people, but the present buildings will scarcely house 200. We have often had to erect small wooden huts to make room for our many guests, but brick houses would be much more in keeping with our needs. Life in wooden huts is difficult high up in the Shropshire hills, particularly in the winter months, and some friends who visit us are often surprised at the poor circumstances in which we live.

For years we held our communal meetings and meal-times in a large Nissen (corrugated iron) hut which was very bad for the health of the community, especially in winter. We planned to build a new dining and meeting hall as long ago as the summer of 1951, but unfortunately progress was slow, and it was not until the autumn of last year that we moved into the new building. At the Bruderhof, the dining-room is the centre of the community, for here we gather not only for our communal meals but for all other meetings. We celebrated the opening of the hall with our harvest festival, and many of our neighbours visited us on this occasion. Until then we had lacked a suitable place for the performance of choral and musical items, and for the Christmas play which we present every year to our household and to friends in the surrounding area. One hundred neighbours attended the performance last Christmas.

Unfortunately the kitchen and laundry at Wheathill are still thoroughly inadequate and further facilities are urgently needed. The new building for the laundry was erected last year but it has not yet been possible to finance the installation of machinery and a more powerful electric plant.

The farm continues to be the main department of work and the community is largely dependent upon its produce. We were therefore thankful that during 1953 the weather was favourable and we were able to harvest good crops.

Another task of the Wheathill Bruderhof is to make community life known to friends on the Continent. Last year there were a number of journeys to Switzerland, Germany, Holland and Belgium. Two of our members, Hugo Brinkmann and Walter von Hollander, are at present in the Ruhr district making contact with friends who would like to see a Bruderhof beginning in Germany. Peter Mathis is in Switzerland, and we are undertaking regular journeys throughout England. It is also our hope to reach new people through open-air speaking, an account of which is given in this number.

Economic Development at Primavera. About eighty people arrived during the year, from Europe and North America, and a few from South America. This meant that living accommodation was insufficient and dwelling houses had to be built as quickly as possible. Now the cry comes from all sides for larger communal buildings such as kitchens, laundries, schools and kindergartens. Provisional buildings must be replaced and more agricultural buildings and store-houses erected. A large new dining and meeting hall was long overdue in Isla Marguerita and this was begun last year. This hall will serve as the meeting room for communal gatherings of the members of all three Bruderhof communities at Primavera.

Last year we completed a new wing to our hospital consisting of wards for thirty beds. At the same time a small isolation house and the first section of the new maternity block were built. The cold water installation was extended, which meant an economy in working strength, but a hot-water system is badly needed. The rooms in the hospital lack proper flooring and there is need for a better operating theatre and a room for the X-Ray apparatus. Our hospital work becomes continually more extensive, and we are glad about the progress and technical improvements made during the past year.

This period of rapid building meant that the saw-mills were heavily taxed to supply all the necessary timber. The joinery and carpentry shops were only working for our own needs and as a result there was practically no sawn wood for sale. The turning-shop, our best industrial income-earning department, was as usual not able to keep pace with the demand. Four new turning lathes are now on their way from England, and, with a newly-established branch in the United States, we hope to be able to export wood-turnery to that country, where the market offers better prices.

The farm land under cultivation has been considerably extended and improved this year, a laborious undertaking involving the clearing of forest. According to the traditional methods of the country, the land is then worked by hand and the stumps of the trees remain in the ground. So far we have mostly followed this practice, but now are concerned to find the best mechanical method of wholesale removal of

the stumps from the cleared land so that it can be worked with modern farm machinery. A chain-saw to cut up logs, and tractors for power clearing are required.

In the cattle work a good deal has been done to overcome the setbacks suffered during the civil war in 1947. At that time the fences were badly damaged and the herd itself depleted. Last year new fences and corrals were erected and animals purchased, so that the herd is now better balanced as regards age groups. But the total head of cattle is still too small to provide for the constantly growing number of people, and we hope to buy more land and cattle soon. The most marked improvement has been made in the milk production. One of the dairy herds has doubled its output since last year. The Friesian bull we bought several years ago has proved its worth and now another young bull of this breed has been added to the stock. It is our aim to increase our milk and dairy products still more through good breeding, careful culling, and plenty of good pasture.

Pig-rearing has been quite successful and has provided the household of 750 people with enough fats. The poultry has also done well. The hatching eggs that were brought directly from the U.S.A. during the last two years improved the strain. Last year's chicks have given fifty per cent more eggs than our old local stock.

Most of the community's food is home grown, apart from wheat for which the climate is unsuitable, but the greater part of the arable work, which increases from year to year, consists of the production of fodder for the farm animals—the horses, pigs, dairy cattle and poultry.

Fruit growing is making steady progress. Grape-fruit, orange and lemon juice are strained, bottled and pasteurised for our own consumption. This year we bottled 7,000 quarts, and with careful planning and further capital outlay this could be made into an income-earning branch of our work. There is a good market for such fruit juice in Asuncion, the capital of Paraguay.

For all our industries—sawmills, carpentry, turning-shop and brickworks—for the machinery in the kitchens and laundries, and for generating light and water-pumping, a much larger power supply is needed than that which we have at present. The two steam engines and a small wood-gas generator plant are completely inadequate. Therefore, we decided to purchase a second-hand wood-gas generator capable of producing 250 h.p., compared with the present 65 h.p. The installation will take some time, and in the meantime it will be difficult to make any worth-while increase in production, but eventually this generator will provide us with a central power-plant for all three villages and high voltage electric transmission to the local stations. This will enable the present machinery to be operated to much greater advantage. The brickworks, for instance, which stand idle for long

periods for lack of power, can then produce larger quantities of bricks and tiles which we hope to sell.

To summarise, one could say that last year much preparatory work was done to increase the efficiency of our agriculture, rearing of livestock and turnery. Many improvements were made in the hospital and the building programme was quite extensive. We have the impression that further reserves of capital would enable us to put Primavera's economy on a sounder basis, especially as our thirteen years' experience in Paraguay has shown us what can be done by improving on the traditional methods.

BOOK REVIEW

MORE FOR TIMOTHY, being the Second Instalment of an Autobiographical Letter to his Grandson by VICTOR GOLLANCZ.
Published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., 390 pp., 12s. 6d.

"Why not . . . unfold my own life, with all its sorrows and joys, just as truthfully as I could, and, as an inextricable part of this, (to) explain the ideas that, for a period of fifty years, had been slowly developing in my mind about the way in which our beautiful world could be saved from degradation?"

This is the aim which Victor Gollancz sets for himself in his two Autobiographical Letters to his Grandson, *My Dear Timothy* and *More for Timothy*. The second volume is the subject of this review and the third instalment will probably be published during the coming autumn.

The treatment of the letters is unusual. They are a record of the writer's personal history, his inner conflicts and conclusions, set in the context of world affairs and interpolated with comments about his present reactions to events which are actually taking place at the time of writing.

The book is rambling in style, but it succeeds in presenting a very vivid picture of the many urgent issues confronting men to-day as Victor Gollancz himself has lived and is living through them. This is not a record of one who stands apart from the scene, observing and commenting. Victor Gollancz reveals his own conflict and struggle to find the truth, and the book itself postulates a challenge which, if taken up earnestly, would certainly lead towards the better society in which he himself believes.

One gains the impression that while he is writing, Mr Gollancz is in the process of coming to a final decision about his own position in relation to the challenge he so clearly formulates. In his first volume, *My dear Timothy*, he had to say, ". . . I know with every atom of my being, that there is only one answer: absolute pacifism, absolute communism (not in the Stalinist sense, but in the early religious sense of holding all things in common), an absolute living of the Christian

ethic. I not only know it: I knew it when the positions I honestly held positions—that I still largely hold—were the positions neither of absolute pacifism nor of absolute communism.” *In More for Timothy* he writes, “I hesitate no further: I now declare myself a pacifist.” In both volumes, however, he makes it abundantly clear that pacifism dare not be a mere negation, that it demands a fight against those evils of self-seeking and possessiveness on a personal and national plane which make war inevitable; that it demands a new man and a new society. We hope that the third volume will reveal how he is going to implement this demand.

In his chapter on ‘Communist Mentality, Conscience and Treason’ he shows a deep appreciation of that agonising over the misery and need of men which creates communists, but he sees equally clearly that “it doesn’t follow at all that if a man has enough to eat he must live like a son of God”. He shows that no system can ever produce a new man, and that Marxism, starting with the impulse to create a more Christian society, became obsessed by the need for a new system and is now creating a society in which unethical, or anti-ethical, men and women are being deliberately ‘engineered’. He also points out clearly that many men, who are drawn to communism by the promptings of a sensitive conscience, abrogate their consciences for the sake of the ‘party line’; that many such men perpetrate a blasphemous and fatal self-contradiction and so cut themselves off from reality and from God.

In his chapter, ‘Waiting on God’, Mr Gollancz reveals without reserve his inner conflict, not on the personal, subjective level on which so many earnest men lose themselves, but as an insistent demand which the evils of society make upon the individual to live in a new and radically different relationship to his fellow men. He sees, with a clarity given to few, that men are created for unity and community, and above all he sees the objective consequence of this recognition. He says, “As for my own present attitude to Christian communism: it differs greatly, and in two respects, from what I felt on that other occasion. My objections, whether genuine or otherwise, have gone by the board: here also, as in the case of pacifism, worry about relativities is over. I accept, without reservation, the duty of living with all things in common; and my inclination to do so, already strong, has become even stronger”. He leaves it as an open question, however, whether he himself is prepared to take the consequences of his own recognition radically and without compromise. His honesty in revealing his own conflict commands our respect, but it is indeed the eleventh hour, and to whom much is given, of him much will also be required.

For all who recognise that education is a vital factor in the building of society and human relationships, Mr Gollancz’ experience as a master at Repton during the First World War will be very stimulating

and disturbing. He attempted with his friend David Somervell a revolutionary approach which he defines as follows: "I wanted the boys to be citizens—not mere citizens of their country but citizens of the world: and not mere citizens of the world either, but citizens, over and above that, of the city of God. This is why, at the very outset, philosophy and religion were inextricably mixed up with the politics I saw myself teaching: and remained so to the end. . . ."

This review is inadequate to deal with a book which is a document and record of a man's soul, challenged by an age of destruction and chaos. It is a book which we hope will be read widely by seeking men, for it is a call to brotherhood in public and private life. It is a challenge to us to reassess all our relationships, revealing clearly that no new society can ever be born without changed men.

ARNOLD MASON.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The introductory article, 'Friedrich Nietzsche and Christianity', which is to be concluded in the next number of *THE PLOUGH*, is an excerpt from a dissertation by Eberhard Arnold on the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, published in 1910. European thought in the last decades has been very much influenced by Nietzsche, and we think it important to publish this excerpt as it can lead to a new understanding of the significance of Jesus from another standpoint.

Käthe Kollwitz is better known on the Continent and in America than in England for drawings and sculpture expressive of her deep awareness of human suffering. We should like to have shown our appreciation of her work by reproducing more of her pictures, but perhaps Margret Böning's personal recollections speak for themselves and, at the same time, help us to recognise how the works of Käthe Kollwitz can be a stimulation to a deeper search for a new way of life. Following this article we have thought it appropriate to include the extract from a letter by Vincent van Gogh.

The social message of Christianity and its realisation is very much the note of this present number. The articles, 'The Catholic Worker Movement' and 'Oak Street Parish', both describing earnest attempts to reach the man in the street, are to be read in connection with the report about the Bruderhof open-air meetings, 'Birmingham Bull Ring'. Two letters in the Forum also contribute to this theme.

Victor Gollancz is well-known as one who is concerned for social justice, and for this reason we have chosen the second volume of his autobiography, *More for Timothy*, for review in this issue. The writer reveals not only personal conflicts produced by contemporary problems, but in many cases sets forth radical answers to them.

EBERHARD ARNOLD

FROM HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS
A WITNESS TO COMMUNITY

The Autumn 1953 number of this periodical was devoted to a selection of writings of and about the late Eberhard Arnold, commemorating what would have been his 70th birthday. Now we are glad to be able to publish an extra edition of this issue, including a collection of some of his own writings, a biographical sketch by his wife, and early recollections from friends who had a personal contact with him.

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