

the plough



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"THE PLOUGH, Towards the Coming Order" is a quarterly journal edited for the Society of Brothers 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 communities and outside them, to live by the standards of the Coming Order of justice, love and brotherhood. The Society of Brothers 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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Christians and the State

An interpretation of Romans XIII in conjunction with
Revelation XIII*

In no state ruled by absolute monarchy has there been such centralization as there is to-day in the Fascist or in the Bolshevist state. Just as the monarch was supposed to represent the whole state, in the same way present-day centralism has to sum up everything in one person: in the dictators, Stalin and Hitler. It calls to mind imperial Rome. But no emperor claimed such idolatry, such a deification of his own person, as do present-day dictators. For Nero and other emperors little incense altars were erected here and there, where little balls of incense had to be offered to testify to the religious significance of the unified imperial power, to the genius of the emperor: not to the emperor in person, but to the genius of the emperor. Incense was offered to the personified intellectuality of this phenomenon: in Christian terms, to the demon of imperial power. The genius is the demon. But apart from these little altars, never did Nero or any other Roman emperor bring matters to such a state that at every street corner "Hail, Nero!" was called out. The dictator of to-day is so utterly without all religious or supernatural impulses and spirits that he does not even believe in the genius of the dictator, but only in the little person of the dictator. Thus idolatry is to-day coarsened in the most vulgar way. It is the loud voice, the hair and the nose of the dictator that is worshipped. It is simply the human being who is made into an idol. As a result authority is also robbed of all genius. What the dictator says is done. Thinking is forbidden. He who thinks is hanged. Modern Fascism is such that one could weep about it day and night. Freedom of thought is forbidden. Objective justice is abolished. Goebbels says: "If we are right, it follows that no one else is right."

* This talk was given in autumn 1934. Certain passages refer therefore to the particular political situation in Central Europe at that time.

For us there is no other justice than that which serves our interests". Thus there is absolutely no justice. Stupidity reigns. That is appalling in the twentieth century. Who still believes in progress?

I do not believe that such an unspiritual conception ever ruled or was dominant amongst the American Indians or the primitive Germanic races of Europe. There the chieftain or duke was bound to observe the decisions of the legislative assembly, of the gathering; he was bound to the place of gathering and to the legal conception of the order of the body politic. To-day, however, national egotism and the self-assertion of the present dictator-group control law and justice and all thought.

It is interesting to note that the so-called free confessional synods have issued the slogan 'No separation from the church'. But this paralyses all energy. For when the church becomes godless one cannot say, "We protest, but we remain in the church". When the church is ruled by demons and idolatry one cannot say, "We protest, but we remain in the church". Even the protesting group of the Catholic and of the Protestant church do unconditional homage to the present state, as such. They make the offering of 'Heil, Hitler!' They are prepared to take active part in the functions of government. The reason for this weak and feeble attitude is clear. It is the retribution following the fact that the reformed church has never taken up the clear attitude to the state and to society that the Early Christians did. It is the retribution for its historical sin, in that during the Peasants' War it joined the princely authorities and committed a crime against the popular movements of the so-called "Anabaptists"—just as in England at and after the time of Oliver Cromwell, Christianity sold itself to the state. The cause of Oliver Cromwell's error also lies in the misunderstanding of Paul's words to the Romans (Ch. XIII): "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers".

The great churches always use verses 1-5 to defend their interests in the state: "Let each soul subject himself to the ruling powers. For there is no power but of God, but the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake."

And verses 6-7 are used that the Christian should pay taxes: "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending

continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

Then, however, comes Paul's answer to the tasks of government, the answer of *love* (vv. 8-10): "Owe no man anything, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law". Verses 1-5 show the task that the state has: to punish evil with the sword. In contrast to this Paul says in the answer of *love* (vv. 8-10), especially verse 10, "Love fulfils the law"; and verse 8, "Owe no man anything but love". Thus Paul explains that the Christian way is different from that of the state, especially in verse 10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour".

There is no state without police force and the sword. Thus God has in the state an order of wrath of the sword. That has been ordained by God in the unchristian world, that evil might not take the upper hand. Ravishers and murderers are not to be permitted to kill all little girls. This is God's order for hell. God has also an order in hell; God has also an order for the evil and unjust — that we are not to forget. With regard to evil God must also be *relative* — for as long as evil exists. Therefore the state and police force is God's order in the world of *evil*, not in the world of *good*. In the world of evil God's *relativity* reigns. We cannot now stand up in London and preach, "Away with all policemen!" We have no quarrel with the necessity of order maintained by the governmental authorities for the world of evil. That would be wrong.

But now comes the absolutism of God in *love* (vv. 8-10). In the absolute sphere of love there is no active part taken in the force of the state. In the absolute sphere of God there is no order of police and military. There are two regions. The one region is that of evil and of political power. The other region is that of love and of the Holy Spirit without active participation in state power. The Christian Church is the region of absolute love. The world church and the Church of God are two different things. A man only leaves the region of love, which is the absolutism of God, when he does evil (vv. 1-4).

Verse 10 teaches us, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour". Only when one does evil does one come under the power of the state (Verse 4: "For he (the ruling power) is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid: for he beareth not the sword in vain"). It is often said: "If one refuses to do wrong then one is

in danger of being killed." Paul says that if you are in the Church, you are in love, which means you do nothing evil. If you do nothing evil, you can only be put to death for love's sake, and for that you are willing. Government is ordained by God, but at the same time it is an instrument of the devil. The Church serves only *one* spirit: the *absolute* God. But every state serves two spirits, because it is of evil. On the one hand it serves the order of God, and on the other the devil. The Church would not punish a murderer who turns to her. She suffers evil. The Church suffers death through the state, but she does not commit evil. Therefore the Church cannot deliver up any criminal. That is impossible.

Thus there are two worlds. The one world is the world of evil, but it is given an order by God. The other is the world of pure light and of pure love. It has nothing to do with violence. Hitler is a God-appointed lord of hell. The pacifism of the League of Nations wants to abolish the violence of the sword. Certainly God wills to say something through the pacifists. The pacifists say a little of what is written in verses 8-10 ("Owe no man anything but to love one another. . ."); but they do not say it absolutely, but only relatively, and that is what is wrong. For them verses 8-10 are just as relative as verses 1-5. For Christ and his Church verses 8-10 are absolute. That Paul means this absolutely is seen in the passage "Love is the fulfilling of the law". Fulfilment is always *absolute*. But verses 3 and 4 are *relative*, for they are only concerned with evil. ("For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. . .") They show the relation with regard to evil. Only in relation to evil is government appointed by God. Therefore I said it is God's order for the hell of evil. That is *relative*. But love is the *absolute* order of God (v. 10, "Love worketh no ill to the neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law"). Those who neither love nor want to love may become soldiers and policemen. That is so in the whole Bible from Pharaoh on. Pharaoh was a vessel of God. Pharaoh was an instrument of God. He was a relative instrument for the wrath of God.

Now something more about the devilish origin of the state, relatively seen. We spoke a moment ago about the divine origin of the state, relatively seen. All relation to evil leads to evil, so that the state must turn from God to the devil. Thus governmental authority is relatively appointed by God for the sphere of evil, and in its relation to evil falls a prey to the devil. That is hard to understand.

Revelation XIII and Romans XIII make it clear that the relative order is not the will of God. But he does not utterly forsake men, therefore he gives them the relative order. Should he utterly forsake them, they would not breathe even for a moment more. They would also have no more to eat. Therefore God permits his sun to shine and his rain

to fall on the evil and the good. No man exists in whom there is *nothing* of God left. Even in a woman of the streets, in a brothel, there is still a trace of God. That is what is important in Dostoyevski's novels. Even in a brothel God has still his order: even in an army. But it is an order of hell.

And now we see how the order of hell appointed by God receives its might from hell: "And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and his great might" (Rev. XIII, v. 2). That means that the dragon gives the state its might — "and they worshipped the dragon" (v. 4). Men worship the beast in Hitler and say, "Who is like Hitler? Who can fight like Hitler in the Brownshirts or Black Guards? Who is his equal? Who can fight against his Brownshirts and his army? "They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. XIII, 4). This does not only apply to Hitler. It applies also to the parliamentary British state. Look at India, Ireland and Palestine! "The beast received a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and power was given to him to continue forty and two months. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name and his dwelling" (Rev. XIII, 5-6). Therefore it is given to all great powers to speak blasphemies against God. Goebbels and Hitler! "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (v. 8)—and all that dwell upon the earth worshipped him! Thus this state is appointed by God, inspired by the devil, and therefore rejected. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (v. 10). Christians have no active part in this. Ye cannot serve two masters! If one kills with the sword one must be killed with the sword! The holy Church suffers death with the sword and has faith in God without revenge! "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (v. 10). That is a patient bearing. The Lamb is slain, but the state slays.

The most fearful thing, however, is expressed in verses 11-17: "And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live. And he had power to give life

unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." The second beast is the *world church*. It is the Protestant and Catholic world church! Revolution is the constant wound of the first beast, of the state. But it dies of no revolution, for it is part of the very nature of the state that it constantly falls and is healed again. But it is the world church that "causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast."

The church says people should hang pictures of Hitler in every room and place them on the altars. "And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast" (v. 15). Hitler receives some spirit through the church: "... and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed". Whosoever does not say "Heil, Hitler!" is killed. Further (vv. 16-18) all the people, small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, all accepted the sign on their right hand or on their forehead: the free and the bond, the capitalist and the proletarian. The proletarians and capitalists accept a sign: on their forehead, the swastika on their military cap; on their right hand, the swastika on their right arm — and where it is not the swastika, then the equivalent badge of the other nations. Most terrible of all is the economic consequence. Everything is numbered. No one can buy or sell without the number. And the world church is to blame. It comes to this: the whole state leads to the deification of man, of his might and power! To help in this is the great sin of the church. It helps to idolize man.

Now, however, Paul in the very same XIIIth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans gives yet a second answer to the matter of government, the answer of God's *future*. "That now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. XIII, 11-13). Verses 8-11 ("Owe no man anything but to love one another. . .") speak about love in the Church, and verses 11-13 about the absolutism of the reign of God when his Kingdom comes. The Kingdom of God is approaching; the day has come! The works of darkness, these are the weapons of killing. Hatred and unchastity belong to darkness just as killing does. The conclusion of the whole is — live

like Jesus Christ! Jesus was tempted of the devil. "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and saith unto him 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me!'" (Matt. IV, 8-9). The devil presents his kingdoms of the world: state, glory, the power of the state. The kingdoms of the world are the states. Glory is always either state-power or the Kingdom of God. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me!" That is worshipping the dragon that gave power to the beast. Thou shalt serve God only, says Christ. Thou shalt serve him absolutely, and not only relatively as in the state. Thus Jesus renounced becoming a Roman emperor like the emperor Nero, and became Jesus Christ, and through this, love was again fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Romans XIII, 8-10).

The wonderful thing about the Hutterian works is their vision of the very essence of state and church. This is unknown in the world, even among the religious socialists and pacifists. It is neither mathematics nor theory nor calculation. The Holy Spirit against the spirit of the abyss, the Spirit from on high against the spirit of the abyss: that is the theme. No world-church, and no hole-in-the-corner sect, but the world-embracing expectation of God!

EBERHARD ARNOLD

Justin describes the life of the Early Christians about the year A.D. 160 as the work of reverence, of justice, of love to men and of the expectation of the future in faith, so that here, too, he must testify: "We also once took part in war and murder no less than in all else that is evil. But we *all*, wherever we may live in the whole wide world, we *all* have exchanged the weapons of war — swords for ploughshares, lances for agricultural implements".

With still greater sharpness Theophilus writes to Autolykus about the year A.D. 180: "Even to watch in sport fights dangerous to life is denied us. We can neither take part in nor can we be spectators and accomplices of deeds which bring men to death".

At the end of this early period, Origen writes the Early Christian implication of this attitude of faith in the following unmistakable words: "The Christian must not exert the right of the sword against anyone. The Church of Jesus has quite a different policy". It has an utterly different public responsibility, an utterly different political charge, an utterly different citizenship, an utterly different form of community life from that which the military and judicial power of states based on force must have.

From "The Peace of God" by Eberhard Arnold, pp. 59/60.

“But of that day and hour knoweth
no man. . .”

We live in an age of wars and of rumours of wars. Rather it would be truer to say that we live in an age in which the powers of destruction which are being let loose amongst men rise to heights and peaks which tower above all that has gone before in the history of mankind. We are in an age when men stand helpless before a twentieth century Leviathan of war and suffering and injustice, whose terrifying advance they are powerless to resist and from whom they cannot flee. Men are standing amidst the ruin and bankruptcy of all human striving, and of all human ideals, so that love or freedom or justice seem to be exposed with a hopeless finality as mere futile words; where greed, treachery, lovelessness and selfishness appear as the only realities, and where the future of the world and the destiny of the world seem to be darkened into final frustration.

We live in an age when it would seem that faith and hope and love are about to be quenched and lost in the rising oceans of hatred and bloodshed and cruelty, which threaten to consume mankind and all living things in what would seem inevitable death. We live in an age in which men stand without faith and without direction, amidst the agonies and death throes of the world.

Nineteen centuries ago the Early Christians, driven into the darkness of the catacombs, waited for the return of their Lord. Christ had warned the disciples to expect only tribulation in this world. For them there is to be no sunny path of human prosperity, no good times, no easy friendship or social affluence; but rather sufferings and persecution and the hatred of all nations. The pride and the glories of the world, the victories and achievements of human endeavour and the building of wordly empires were not in the hearts of the despised and hunted little fellowship of Christians. Their hearts and minds were filled with the message of a new empire, the empire of the peace and love and justice of Jesus.

Jesus would return again. He had first gone the way that the disciples were now going. He had travelled through the lovelessness of this world. Jesus had met the cruel fury of the empires of this world, of the religions of this world, and the ambitions and selfishness of the children of this world. He had travelled the way of love and humility, at last to die at the hands of the world, ridiculed, despised and trampled upon by the apparently all-powerful weight and brutality of the world. And he had risen again by the power and by the hand of the God who is the eternal Father of all life, and who is unconquerable love. Jesus had said he would return. Jesus had bidden his disciples to

have courage and above all else *faith*. Strength and love he promised them, strength to go his way, strength and love from the heart of God, from the Spirit of God, from his Spirit, the Holy Spirit. So through the love that came to them and filled their hearts the character of God's Kingdom was lived out in their simple daily lives, in love to Jesus and in love to one another, in faith and in hope; and at this there fell upon them the whole demonic wrath of the kingdoms of this world.

In the surrender of their complete lives to the rulership of Jesus and his Spirit, the king of this world was affronted in the capital of his own empire. With torture and torments and indescribable cruelty, (yes, and with an endurance in the affliction of cruelty which is itself remarkable), the Roman world power asserted the authority of its dominion. But this little band of believers, the waiting and expectant Church, endured in faith and humility, in steadfastness and strength beyond all breaking, waiting for the hour of the Father, and for the Son who would return "like the lightning that cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west; for Jesus, the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven with power and with glory".

Already in the first centuries the priests of the religions of this world had tried to tear the faith and the message of the Kingdom of Jesus from the hands of the faithful, and bring it into submission to the authority of the kingdoms of the world. At the beginning of the fourth century a church which was no longer the embassy of the coming reign of the Kingdom of God bartered away the name of Christ and a distorted and falsified proclamation of his gospel for the seat of authority in the temples of the Cæsars. Here in the tottering and collapsing structure of Roman imperialism, here in the foulness and evil of the twilight of the Roman world power, those who had lost the faith of Christ, who had lost the vision and certainty of his triumphant return and in whose hearts the love and recognition of his life and being had become dimmed, made Christianity into the religion of Cæsar.

And after Cæsar and his legions had collapsed under the dust of the trampling tribes of Northern Europe, the tradition of this 'state' Christian church was carried on — the state church, the moral and religious handmaiden of all the proud and plunderous tyrannies from the Roman empire down to the present time. As a church of the powers and ambitions of men it is no wonder that it should look back, over twenty centuries of preoccupation in the making and breaking of human kingdoms, to those far-off days when men waited for Jesus Christ and his Kingdom, as to a time of fanaticism and superstition. To the world there seems to be something tremendously far off, not only in time but also in belief, about the faith and life and times of the first Christians; something pathetic and ironical about the high and certain faith

in which they waited for an event which, through two thousand long years, has not appeared upon the horizon of human history. The world has mocked this early faith of the first Christian Church as the delusion of a hard pressed and overwrought folk, and has marched down the years in the more sober strength of its human hardheaded, selfish and practical application to the affairs of the day, and its buying and selling, its law courts and its law, its armies and its plundering, its empires and its glory.

Rome fell. In the dust and clash of arms, in the cruelty and terror and apprehension which accompanied the crumbling of what had been called the eternal city, Europe passed into the chaos of the dark ages. The law and administration which was and still is regarded as a pattern and model of civil administration had failed to stay the course, and its collapse left Europe at the mercy of whatever adventurer chose to collect a band of warriors together, and to pillage the land. In the midst of this lawless and indefinite time in history, the voice of the Roman world church manufactured her "dual" system of religion — the religion of the two ways, the two callings, the secular and the religious. Here the secular stands "over-against" the religious; the world of the statesman, the merchant and the soldier "over-against" the world of the priesthood of the Roman church and of the religious orders. The secular world with its injustice and its bloodshed remains unredeemed and in some way unredeemable, tolerated by the church as a less perfect order in which the church functions as priest. For those who seek the perfect way there is the religious life, the life of priesthood and meditation and of prayer. But this acceptance of the world by the church is never the message of the Kingdom of God, coming in glory to transform this world of death and suffering into the world of life and peace. In catholic Christianity the church becomes the church of the world, reserving as a higher order and somehow outside the real life of mankind the life of the religious orders. But it is never the Church of Christ *in* the world, the Bride, pure and holy, waiting in faith and hope for the coming of her Lord and the joy of his Kingdom.

So it came about that in this thin, pale light of the mediaeval world, the sad, devitalized asceticism of monasticism fled from the stench of the crimes of human life. But this longing for personal deliverance and unity with God which dominated the monastic life, and its resulting abandonment of not only the sin of the world but also in some way the reality of the practical life of mankind (although this was only expected from those who felt a special vocation) showed again this false duality, this false cleavage between the secular and the religious. In reality it was the abandonment of the world itself, of suffering, lost

humanity to a hopeless fate. The catholic church in losing the vision of the Church of Christ as the Bride, reflecting in her purity the will and intention of her Lord for the lost world, lost at the same time its recognition of sin itself. It left the victim in the hands of the murderer, it left the poor and oppressed in the hands of the tyrants, it left the exploited in the hands of the rich, it left the whole world groaning in impurity and tyranny, and it made no protest. It was left to a later age to hear again the prophetic voice proclaiming the Kingdom of God on earth.

Through the darkness of these lost times the spirit of the first Christian Church had lived and worked. We hear of little groups here and there hunted and scorned as heretics, but who carried so far as we can see from the little that we know of them the message and faith and life of the first followers of Jesus. The Waldensian movement in Lombardy, the "Poor men of Lyons" and the Lollards in England all spoke of the humility and love of Christ. Even from the cloister itself the voice of the love of Christ came at last protesting not only against the sin of the world, but also against the worldliness of the world church, of the priests and of the monks. And at last the voice of this love came clear and pure again, naming the sin of the world for what it was and denouncing the false systems of world religion under whose blessing and authority the tyrant of the world hid his crimes.

The sixteenth century heard again the proclamation of the message of the Kingdom of God on earth and of the return of Christ. The heart of mankind was again stirred by the wind of the Spirit of God. The meaning and significance of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus was again understood. The call of Jesus to the victorious life of love here and now was understood again, and answered by hundreds and thousands of men and women. The faith of the waiting and expectant Church of Jesus was again bright and living in the blackness of the world; and the significance of this faith for suffering and broken humanity was realized with the joy of those who having lost their treasure find it again. The world and the tyrants of the world saw again the baby Child of the crib of Bethlehem challenging their dominion, and they resorted to the age-old method of massacre to forestall his victory and his reign.

The significance of the sixteenth century is to be found in those who found again the patient, suffering, living faith of the first Christians. The faith of Christ, his love and hope, lived again in men who again waited upon God and upon his will and judgment. Their suffering and dying was truly in the Spirit of Jesus, and they waited again in the clamour, cruelty and injustice and lovelessness of the world for his return and for his Kingdom. The waiting and expectant Church was again amongst

men. They asked not for signs but only to do God's will till the end: but the end itself they were content to leave in God's hands.

Four centuries have passed since this great time of awakening, since the peasant rising of Germany was put down in blood and cruelty and since the so-called Anabaptists died for their faith. This great spiritual movement which swept Europe, and which called upon God and his justice and judgment, would seem to have been again left without God's answer. It would again seem that its simple faith has been submerged in the noisy doings of men, which since the so-called reformation times have made such tremendous advances in the human affairs of science and art and empire. More than ever has the faith of those childlike men and women of the first Christian century come to look like insupportable superstition. More than ever the self-sufficiency of human effort and power seems to have established itself in the unheard-of richness and variety and achievement of modern times. For the tyrants, the rich and the prosperous, law, order and decency seemed established.

But from beneath all this splendour there comes ever and again the rumblings of a storm which seems to be gathering with the force and impetus of the whole misery, suffering, injustice and sins of mankind from the beginning of the world. For this post-reformation time has not followed a smooth and frictionless path. The clashing of the interests of the different national groups in their imperialistic aims, the oppression, slavery and exploitation in the rise of industrialism and modern capitalism, the abortive attempts at revolution by the oppressed have been the fruits that have strewn the path of this modern world-building. And now the nations in their fear and greed find themselves in the possession of weapons which foreshadow universal destruction. They stand like men who, in an earthquake, are caught in the collapse of the city of their own building. Men are standing before a realization of what this self-sufficient life of the world has been. The far off rumblings of world-catastrophe are beginning to be heard. It is as if at the beginning of the present century, and especially since the world war of 1914-1918, the hypocrisy and emptiness of human ideals have risen to their highest point, only to collapse utterly. The hour is indeed a dark one.

In the crumbling edifices of this modern, man-made world, men are standing helpless, hopeless and without faith. It has been a dark two thousand years since the light of God's love came into the world. But through the darkness of these years of history this light of God's love and the message of its final victory in the world, the message of its return in glory, has been carried through all the scorn and contempt and fury of the whole world by those few who have dared to believe

it, and who have been ready to die for their faith. To-day the world with its noisy and confident clamour stands at last in indecision before a future that is terrible. The hollowness of its building is at last apparent. What is the weakness at the heart of the dying world? It has no faith, it has no hope, it has no love. These things it trampled upon as being too unreal, too intangible for the solidity of the building.

But at last we must remember again the words of Jesus when he said, "Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" And so we are recalled again to that early, simple faith of the first followers of Jesus which the world mocked and found impossible to believe. We are recalled again to the homeless Child in the manger whose life and death and resurrection have sent a message of light down the ages of the world. We are recalled again to the first Christians who, in the defencelessness of their community of love, waited for the return of their cast-out and crucified Jesus as the victorious hero of love and peace; as the establisher of an eternal Kingdom of truth and justice.

This last revelation of the loss of all faith in God and the effectiveness of his will on the one side, and the revelation of the hypocrisy and hollowness of human ideals and the faithlessness of men on the other side leaves the world in the darkest night of despair. Only the little fellowship of those who, through this dark night of the ages, have kept alight the candle of faith waits in certain hope for the coming of the morning light of the Kingdom of God. Only those who through this night of the ages have faithfully watched and endured in the simple way of life and love know in this darkest hour that the dawn is coming. Only those who, in the strength of genuine, pure and uncompromising love, have trodden the way of the peace and justice of Jesus through the dark and murderous ages of the world know that his Spirit of love and peace is the decisive and victorious power of the future. Only those who have known the nature of God as the inner heart of the peace and unity of his Church Community on earth, as opposed to the selfish and murderous struggle for private possessions, know the character of the coming age of God.

It is not without significance that at a time when the earth is soaked in the bloody deeds of the mightiest armies of all times, and the air thick with the reckless and limitless threats of the opposing powers of world might, an earthquake should wreck half a land and destroy more in a few minutes than the armies accomplish in weeks. Such is the measure of men. The voice which called men to follow the way of peace and justice was mocked and killed. Those who followed met the same fate. The light which lighted the world was rejected because men loved darkness more than light. The flickering flame of the Church

Community of Jesus has throughout the centuries been all but extinguished by the savage blasts of the greedy tumults of the world around it. But for those who will hear, the voice of God still speaks in the world. Above the fearful din of the times the voice of eternity speaks. But its ring is charged with the wrath of judgment. Its tone is ominous. It rises with an increasing insistence. Its power is more inescapable than all powers. Its wrath and judgment come from the fact that it is love, and because it must fight against and prevail over all that is unjust and cruel and death-dealing. It is the voice of judgment upon all that is false, hypocritical and selfish simply because it is the voice of eternal life and love.

God speaks to men when they are most unready to hear. God comes when men are least expecting him and are least prepared for him. He comes when men have almost forgotten that he once spoke in the world. God comes to the world as the most decisive of all realities and the most powerful of all powers when men have almost completely ceased to believe in him. His will reveals itself as inescapable when men have ceased to regard it. And in this world-scepticism there stand, as the darkest and most hypocritical of all, those who have presumed to be the servants of the Lord but who have abandoned his service. They stand like the servant in the New Testament who begins to smite his fellowservants and to eat and drink with the drunken saying, "My Lord delayeth his coming". But above the clamour and the violence, the cruelty and the unbelief and the scepticism of the world, the voice of eternity comes down through the ages, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh".

STANLEY FLETCHER

It was the Christians' unbounded faith in the almighty God which convinced them that this turning upside down of all values, this transposing of all established orders, can never be brought about by human might. Such a conviction was inconceivably more effective than any revolutionary menacing of existing power and law by the ordinary political methods of humanity. The fact that it was not a matter of rebellion, of physical force, or of armed insurrection, which might easily have been put down by the power of the state, made these representatives of the future world order and the coming Kingdom appear all the more dangerous.

From "The Early Christians" by Eberhard Arnold, p. 54.

PAST AND PRESENT

St. Francis, the Man

Seven hundred years is a good test of a man, whether he belongs to the living or to the dead. And when the septuacentenary of St. Francis of Assisi was celebrated about eighteen years ago, it would have been difficult to name any other character in history whose name could, from so far-off a date, have stirred such world-wide interest and given pleasure to so large a number of quite ordinary people, by no means limited to the Church and faith which he professed. Surely in such a life there is something very vital waiting to be explained—or rather, not waiting to be explained at all in the broad sense, but explaining itself in that very fact. Why is St. Francis of Assisi so much alive as a personality—one of the most alive people that the world has ever produced? You may name men—even among his own contemporaries—of far greater intellectual power. Innocent III was one of the greatest of the Popes; he represented Christ for the Church at a most difficult and critical turning-point of her advance to power. Frederic, the World's Wonder—an opponent of that advance, and a defeated opponent—was certainly one of the most remarkable men in history whose record stands for failure; and there are probably many to-day who think that his failure to make good against the temporal encroachments of the Papacy was one of the greatest tragedies and set-backs to humanistic culture of the middle-ages. But even those who are temperamentally drawn to admire proud success or fine failure—and there are many enough of both minds to provide the numbers—even those so minded could not hope to see a celebration of the septuacentenary of these two great protagonists of opposing causes as spontaneously felt or as widely recognized as the septuacentenary of St. Francis. Why is it?

I am going to suggest the reason by comparison with a tercentenary celebration which had about it a similar liveliness—the tercentenary of Shakespeare. Though of Shakespeare's life we know hardly anything, while of the life of St. Francis we know a great deal, the tercentenary of Shakespeare was not merely a ceremonial function: it was a living memorial; the man himself came through; and that is really the test of all centenaries—whether they are living or dead. Shakespeare came through because, though we know nothing of his life, in his plays he is still magnificently alive. He was a maker of many plays, and we have them all. St. Francis was the maker of one play only, a play that lasted twenty years. He lived playing it; and his play, presented with all the

temperament of an artist, was the pattern and example of Christ. It is not usual to consider St. Francis as a great artist; but the peculiar quality of his life—the way he lived it, and the extraordinary liveliness of his personality belong to the domain of art; and I am not at all sure that the secret of the fascination St. Francis has for the world does not lie in the fact that he was the artist turned saint, and that he was so beautiful to the eyes of his contemporaries, and remains so still, simply because he carried his artistry into holy life.

The artist turned saint is rare; and the reason is fairly obvious. The artist is sensuous, and has a right to be sensuous with a good conscience. He fulfils himself, expresses his personality as it was born to be expressed, by the creation of beautiful things. The *modus operandi* of the saints—of those of the middle-ages, at any rate—has been to put beautiful things behind them, and to avoid all sensuous indulgence; a course, therefore, to which the artist by nature would be the last to turn. Fra Angelico struck a happy harmony; but though saintly in the direction of his art, he was rather the recorder than the doer; and in the fortunate circumstance that the Church absorbed and gave fulfilment to his powers as a painter he found his vocation. His patron was there ready and waiting for him; entering a life of religion he entered his profession, with the way made broad before him.

For St. Francis the case was very different. The form of his art was not a form for which the Church at that time could find ready employment. Nothing is more evident, in the event of his conversion, than the obvious difficulty he had in fitting his sense of a religious vocation to the institutional Christianity of his day. This way and that he casts desperately for a solution; the formalism of the Church repels him; where he looks for a door he finds barriers; and driven by the imperious need for self-expression—more strong in the artist than in most—he has to discover his own formula, to do an absolutely original thing, outside the direction of Mother Church, before he can find the matrix into which his life is to pour itself and find fulfilment.

Had he been by nature a painter or a poet, St. Francis might have joined the immortals on a lower scale than that which he attained; and might, from a worldly point of view, have lived a more contented life, expressing his sense of beauty—the beauty of holiness—in a more attainable form of art than that which he made so strangely his own. But though we hear on one or two occasions that he drew, and that when he took up a craft in the early days of the Brotherhood he chose wood-carving, we have no reason for thinking that he did these things specially well. His 'Canticle of the Sun' is spiritually beautiful and expressive, but it is not great art. The artistry of Francis lay in another direction; he was the instinctive dramatist, the play-actor; and with this gift went another—an extraordinary power of imaginative sym-

pathy, which made him a wonderful reader and manipulator of human nature.

That is the sort of artist he was, that was his equipment; and when conversion fell upon him, or when—to put it in other words—quite literally, he fell in love with Love, then the dramatist and the sympathetic reader of human nature was driven to find a form for his art that should immediately and without circumlocution express the central idea that had hold of him. That central idea was Love, which, to his spiritual understanding, had been pre-eminently expressed in two great events of the world's history—the Creation and the Incarnation. Francis set himself to express the idea of the Creation and the idea of the Incarnation in terms of beauty; and being a dramatist the method he chose was the representative method—not self-consciously but instinctively.

Thenceforth his life became charged with two patterns, whose imprint lay upon all his actions and words—the pattern of God's mind in the work of Creation, and the pattern of God's mind in the work of the Incarnation and Redemption. Of these, in deep humility, forever protesting his unworthiness, he made his own life and teaching the image. In the simplest parable of words—'Brother Sun', 'Sister Moon', 'Brother Fire', 'Sister Water'—he set before men's minds the essential unity in the divine purpose of all created things; and in the most compelling parable of the acts of his daily life he set forth as faithfully, as literally, and as beautifully as he knew how, the life and character of Christ.

It was an amazing experiment of individualism versus institutionalism; and the opposition was an unconscious one. Francis was an artist, not a theologian: problems of dogma did not trouble him. To the one or two which presented themselves in the course of his ministry he gave a beautiful humanist solution which happened also to be orthodox, and passed on his way, independent, unembarrassed, submissive to the ruling of Mother Church, but curiously at large in the glorious liberty of an evangelism based on a few of the simplest sayings of Christ to his disciples, to which the disciples had themselves given the same practical interpretation as Francis himself.

Thus, without disputation, without involving himself in theological arguments for which he had no mind, Francis presented the world with a human view of Christ which to many must have come with almost the force of a new gospel. Some, looking back to that day, a day of dangerous divisions and heresies, hold that the Pope's dream of him was really true and that his revivifying influence, bringing back into the Church something which it had lost of the life and mind of Christ, saved it from falling into those further and greater schisms which were threatening it. When Francis knelt and for the love of God

kissed the hand of the ill-living priest, whose effective administration of the sacraments the Cathari denied, he presented the spectators with something more moving than argument; when he answered the pious conundrum of a disputatious Dominican, suspicious of his large charity toward sinners—how was a man to fulfil the scriptural injunction of rebuking the wicked without ceasing?—when Francis answered, “By living the life of the gospel”, his sheer spiritual common-sense, illumined as always by love and by his faith in the prevailing power of that gospel which he preached, put theology back into its proper place, for that time at any rate.

In his doing and saying of these things there was a gracious ease of mind independent of intellectual power. They came naturally from him: they came because of his transparent simplicity and sincerity; they came by an art which had turned to holiness as the most beautiful and attractive thing that the human mind could know. It was quite a new idea—it still is with some people: so new that they have not got to it—that goodness, when well-presented, is to human nature more naturally attractive than evil.

Because he was an artist in human nature and a lover of human nature, St. Francis had faith in human nature. It is a faith which the world—unable to present goodness as attractively as St. Francis did—still lacks. Were all artists like him, our duty toward our neighbour would become a game. He played it so beautifully that the memory of how he played it is still with us—a possession for the meek upon earth.

‘Joculatores Domini’—The Lord’s Players—was the name by which Francis and his Brotherhood were known at the beginning of their ministry. They played the Lord’s game, and never wished for a better.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN.

During the early period the Christian movement spread almost entirely amongst the hard-working sections of the population. This composition of the Church was in accord with the high value it set upon work. This was one of their main principles. Each must live by his own labour. Each must work hard enough to be able lovingly to help the need of others. All must work, for all must make a sacrifice in order that all may have that wherewith to live.

From “The Early Christians” by Eberhard Arnold, p. 49.

It is very significant for the spirit which ruled in the Church that up to the time of Hermas rich men could only gain a place in the structure of the Church by divesting themselves of their incomes on behalf of their poor brothers. Wealth, which is a deadly peril, is to be used to advantage by distributing it to the whole community.

From “The Early Christians” by Eberhard Arnold, p. 50.

Christ or Civilization?

Being the answer to several questions put to us on
a recent journey to the North of England

On a sending-out journey to the North of England, many questions were put again and again to Stanley Fletcher and myself, and I think it might be of interest to all to raise these points again and to try and answer them.

One of these questions is: "Is there only one way of Christ?" We do not believe that there are as many different ways as there are individuals in the world. We must be clear that Christ spoke about the *one* will of the Father, the one ultimate, objective will which must be done; and also that he spoke about one narrow door, and one way of life. It is impossible for Christ to call a person to a way of life which differs in this or that point from this one will of God.

It is the teaching of the world-churches to-day that Christ brought salvation and redemption for the sin-loaded soul; but they go no farther. The measure as to whether our way of life is of Christ or not can only be whether it is in complete unity with the message of Christ, and with the revolution which Christ brought. That is an absolute truth. We must be clear about it, and no man has a right to twist it round.

The question of the one way hangs very closely together with the point: "Can we serve two masters?" With Jesus we find definitely that we cannot serve God and Mammon. He calls us to a way, absolutely destitute of property. This is shown very clearly when Jesus called the rich young ruler to "go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me". That call which he gives is an absolute call to all men. It is shown in the whole of the scriptures. If it is argued that Christ called only the one rich young ruler to do this, and that he called perhaps all other rich people to be rich and to be "good stewards", then we must say very clearly that this is absolutely wrong. Jesus said, "Woe unto you that are rich" (Luke VI, 24), and again, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" — one or the other. If that is not clear, I do not know how he could have put it more clearly. If the churches had been clear on this question of justice and righteousness, perhaps the world would not stand where it stands to-day. But we must be clear in this, that the churches of to-day are part of the injustice of this world. They have forgotten to seek in the first place the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. To seek righteousness means to live righteousness; but to live righteousness means to live in absolute justice, in the social part of life also.

It must become clear whether we want to live out the ultimate will of Christ or whether we seek only our own salvation and the salvation of

other single souls. With Jesus we find that only those who *do* his will are built on rock — and that also includes the salvation of the soul. Of first importance is the will of God, because it means redemption for all creation. And to do the will of God *is* to find salvation. That is what we find in Jesus.

In this connection it is very important in which way we read the Bible. Do we read it in order to experience mystical or emotional feelings? Then we shall not find anything more. But we should read it to find the will of Christ, in order to do it. Then we shall find the will of Christ, and with it also the inner experience of Christ.

We should never forget that Jesus said again and again that the tree would be recognized by its fruits. It is not hard to recognize the nature of the tree of civilization by its fruits: it is the tree of destruction, murder, injustice, impurity and unfaithfulness. This present war is the necessary fruit of men's daily life in this so-called civilization. But what were the fruits that Jesus wanted to see?

The first necessary fruit of Jesus is *unity*. How else shall the world recognize that we are his disciples? Jesus said: "That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me" (John XVII, 22-23). How can we show this fruit of unity with one another in an individual life, as part of civilization? It is impossible, because this civilization is ruled by Mammon, by the spirit of this world, which is a liar and a murderer from the beginning, which is the spirit not of unity but of disintegration, destruction and separation. Unity can only be found in a life of brotherhood in community, as with all the other fruits of Christ — a life of justice, a life of love, a life of peace, purity and honesty.

This unity is not found in the churches at all, and yet it must be the first fruit if we follow Jesus. Certainly Christianity would not be the religion of a whole nation if the churches made this total demand as Jesus made it. But if men do not want to follow this total demand of Christ, which leads to redemption and salvation, the spirit of the world will make its own demand, and it will demand the whole man. Here we must be clear that we cannot go the way of the injustice of this world and be at the same time disciples of Jesus. Do we not here understand the message of Jesus, when he said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v, 20).

Here we come to another question which is put to us again and again. "Does community mean isolation from the world, and the freeing of oneself from the sense of responsibility in the world?" It is really just the opposite. It is just isolation and separation which is the root of sin, the root of the world, of this civilization. Separation means death, because

it means separation from the source of life. True community puts uniting and gathering in place of isolation. That means first of all uniting with the source of life, and the fruit of this experience is community. Therefore community means the overcoming of isolation. Jesus says very clearly, "He who does not gather with me scatters". The power of gathering and uniting is the sap of the new tree. It is the sin of mankind that men do not want to be united with Jesus, to live in Jesus and in community with one another. The question is: Which master do we serve, God or Mammon? There is no alternative. Many recognize to-day that war is wrong, others that social injustice is wrong, others again that impurity and unfaithfulness are wrong. But there is no meaning in rejecting the fruits of a tree if one is oneself a part of that very tree which brings forth these evil fruits.

But now we come to the question of responsibility in and for this world. Can we still believe, in this great crisis, that our responsibility is to stay within the injustice of civilization, as a part of this injustice, and to make our stand there? Whither has this worldly 'Christianity' led our whole civilization? Can we believe even now in that kind of stewardship of our private property or natural talents and gifts which the churches proclaim to-day? Is it not so that Christ demands the full man and the full surrender to his new order of unity, and not one degree less? We believe only in a stewardship which gives all that one is and has into the unity of the Church of Christ. That alone is true responsibility.

Let us seek the one way of life where all separation and isolation is overcome, because this is our responsibility, that the new tree of life with its fruits may be revealed to the world in this time.

We must go this way, even if the world says it is unreal, or that "these communities cannot live without the products of our civilization and of our capitalistic system" (another argument against community which we often hear).

The true reality is different. In reality nothing belongs to the injustice of this world except the fruits of it. But the fruits of creation, including the material things, belong in reality to *all* men and to the unifying purpose of God. And not only the fruits of creation but we ourselves, all of us, whether capitalist or unemployed, socialist or soldier, we are all answerable to God for *his* task. This then is our responsibility on this earth — to be answerable to God for his tree of unity.

We wish to thank all the friends whom we met on this journey in Preston, Lancaster, Morecambe, Rochdale, Kendal and Wolverhampton, for the openness which we found and for the friendship which we experienced among you. We greet you all who read THE PLOUGH with this challenge. The time is urgent. Let us come to the true sense of responsibility! Let us gather with Christ and unite with him on the one way, as branches of the one tree of Life!

J. HEINRICH ARNOLD.

Quakerism and War

The differences in judgment among Christians as to the lawfulness of participating in war do not spring so much from differences in their attitude towards war itself as from differences in their attitude towards the state and towards the existing social order. All Christians are agreed that war is a terrible evil and that it is always the outcome of sin. Though they would hesitate to commit themselves to it, most of those who justify participation in war would admit when pressed that war itself is sinful, by whomsoever waged and for whatsoever cause. If Christians differ in their judgment about war, they divide over the assumption of present-day political pacifists that war is always the worst of all evils. Of this assumption, it must be said that it is not an obvious deduction from Christian principles. Indeed the Sermon on the Mount would seem to point in the other direction, for our Lord apparently suggests that to harbour the resentments from which murder comes or the lustful thoughts from which spring sexual offences, is morally as bad as to commit the overt acts. On the other hand, a powerful case can be built up on the appeal to experience in favour of the view that it is better to suffer the worst evils under the most vicious form of government than seek to remedy them by war. But this case is less convincing to-day than it was a few years ago. It is not a self-evident truth, and a man does not forfeit his right to be called a Christian if he remains unconvinced by it. Obviously those Christians who are convinced of the truth of the view that war is the worst of all evils will find in it an additional rational support for their pacifism. But the Christian pacifist outlook does not depend on acceptance of this assumption. Unless I am much mistaken, many Christians who do not regard war as the worst of all evils remain pacifist, and some Christians who do regard war as the worst of all evils do not on that account become pacifists.

Much more influential is the difference in attitude towards the state and the social order. Some Christians, following Tolstoi, regard the state as inherently evil because it uses force: others, following St. Paul, regard the state as appointed by God to use force in restraint of evil-doers. Some Christians regard the existing social order as morally corrupt and doomed to destruction: others regard the social order as already to some extent leavened and capable of being more completely leavened by the spirit of Christianity. These differences in attitude are the prime factors in determining Christian attitudes in relation to military service to-day. If we regard the state as evil and society as doomed, we may follow de Ligt in a militant campaign against the state. We may seek to hinder the state's sinful activity in waging war, by every means in our power including sabotage. But Christians

who would condemn such militant pacifism will be more likely to say, 'Let us withdraw from society and let us set ourselves to build up a new social order, making ourselves as little dependent on the existing social order as possible'. I take it that this is, in part at least, the attitude expressed in the life and work of the Bruderhof. At the other end of the scale would come those Christians, more particularly Lutheran Christians, who regard the state as God-appointed and who hold that the Christian must share the lot of his community and obey the state, even when he is aware of the moral failure of the community and when he regards the state as in the wrong in any given international conflict.

Quakers as a body have never adopted the Tolstoian view of the state and of the use of force as simply evil, nor do they for the most part despair of society and expect a revolutionary new start. But from the first they were convinced that they as Christians could not engage in military service or defend themselves with carnal weapons. More and more they have come to believe that whatever measures of forcible restraint the state may legitimately use, the methods of modern warfare cannot be included among them. The original peace-testimony of Friends was an assurance to the government of Charles II that under no circumstances would Friends participate in the use of force against the Government. To-day the peace-testimony is usually described as a testimony against all war, and Friends feel called to make it clear that war in their judgment is incompatible with loyalty to Christ. In bearing this testimony, they are prepared to face whatever penalties the state or the community may impose. At the same time, Friends do not wish to separate themselves from the community or to decline service for the community which may help to lessen the sufferings or bind up the wounds of war. In regard to service there are shades of difference among Friends. Some feel that they cannot undertake any service of the kind except of their own free will and in association with Friends. They will join in humanitarian work for which Friends are responsible. Others are willing to join in service organized by the state so long as it is work for the civilian population under civil authority. A few are willing to join the R. A. M. C. and to serve under the military so long as they are not asked to undertake combatant duties and so long as they are engaged on genuine Red Cross work. All Friends would agree that our loyalty to the state is limited by our higher loyalty to Christ and His Church. We will serve the state and the community in all ways that do not compromise our loyalty to Christ. But even legitimate service to the state must give way when Christ's demands require it.

HERBERT G. WOOD

The Message of the Prophet Daniel

Walter Lüthi's book, 'The Church to Come' (Hodder and Stoughton; 7/6), expounds the Book of Daniel and holds the message of the prophet before our age like a mirror, that we may thereby recognize where mankind stands to-day, and what needs to be done. We have been deeply moved by the reading of this book, for that which to-day is still unclear to many men, and which nevertheless is deeply disturbing to many, is here clearly pointed out.

But the most significant thing is that here a division is dared between the power and rulership of God and the pretensions of all human leadership. God is confessed in this book as the one Lord over everything else and over all the great men of the age. And so this book is a challenge to a decision: upon which side do you yourself stand? Whom is it that you are serving with all your gifts and strength? Written in the spirit of faith, this book is a challenge to decisive and innermost faith.

There stand before us two men, Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel, on absolutely different ground, utterly incompatible, as incompatible one with the other as fire and water. These two figures are images for our age — "Nebuchadnezzar, the spirit of the century, for all times and all places the spirit of the century, the spirit of this world, the spirit of the times"; Daniel, stranger in Babylon, the image of the true Church, the people who are called out, the band called together by God commissioned to represent his will, obedient to quite other laws from those which the states of the world carry through by violence and bloodshed and from those dictated by the unjust social order of to-day, absolutely out of tune with the age in their whole understanding of life and attitude to life, and yet standing absolutely in the midst of this world, living among brother-men proclaiming in word and deed the will of God.

Nebuchadnezzar the powerful, mighty king, and the architect of wonderful buildings of great splendour, as we are still able to see to-day from the excavations: "Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold whose height was three-score cubits and the breadth thereof six cubits" (Dan. 3, 1.). "Where there are rows of miserable hovels in which women are sighing at the handmills and children are crying for milk", there Nebuchadnezzar stands his image. "Six cubits broad and sixty cubits high is this abomination of the princes who build 'golden images' from the sweat and the blood and the tears of the working people." "Then the herald cried aloud: 'To you it is commanded, O people, nations and languages, that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that the King hath set up'" (Dan. 3, 4 & 5.). "In all ages, Nebuchadnezzar can only maintain his throne if an altar stands near the throne and lends him the security and strength which he lacks."

"Nebuchadnezzar is a Strong Man, strong in no ordinary sense of the word. He embodies what we know to-day as the totalitarian state. His authority is total, all-inclusive; there is no sphere of life that escapes it." "The fiery furnace has also been set up by Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar and the fiery furnace—these two go together through all ages. Fear, fear of the fiery furnace is the secret driving force of

Nebuchadnezzar's totalitarian state. This fear is so tremendous that all succumb to it. . . "All the people, the nations and the languages fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up" (Dan. 3, 7.). It must be so, for wherever there is a falling away from God and his Spirit of love, peace and justice, there men worship the spirit of this world and time; there rules the spirit of oppression and exploitation, of injustice and lies, of unchastity and godlessness." Every state bears within itself the character of totality, taking the place of God; in our time this is especially apparent. There have been times when other powers, from within the social order of the state, set up claims to totality. In the middle ages it was the church. For a long time already she has held herself in subjection to the demands of the state. Later it was modern learning that set up claims to totality. Through knowledge and research men believed they could themselves take the place of God. All these points of view are out of date. In our time the state claims supreme authority and its power is the last word of wisdom.

But there is one who has the courage to oppose Nebuchadnezzar — Daniel, with two faithful ones. "Behold, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Dan. 3, 16-18.). "This miracle of the confessing Church stands before Nebuchadnezzar in absolute sovereign power, like a wall that springs up suddenly from the earth. And this wall of faith is not from man's hands . . . The man of violence stands so weak and helpless before the witness of the believing community that he entirely loses his kingly bearing and speech." And so he issues the decree that "They should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated" (Dan. 3, 19.). Daniel remains firm in faith and is saved. But even if God had allowed the flames to destroy him, even then it would still stand that he had not worshipped the golden image. "But this is what it says of Nebuchadnezzar: he is to be roused up out of the peace of his house and out of the comfortable prosperity of his palace and to be driven out into the fields, there to lie with a band of iron and brass under the dew of heaven. And God is to take away his human heart and give him the heart of a beast. It is not given to us to know to what extent this prophetic word is already fulfilled in our generation and its rulers, or whether it has still to be fulfilled in us in the future. We can just simply declare that our place is in the very centre of the judgment. The man who oversteps the appointed bounds of humanity, and scorns the Holy Watcher, finally sinks below all human levels, and gets a 'beast's heart'. Yes, in this behaviour he sinks below the beasts."

"We have lived to see what our education would not even let us dream about. We have seen a world war, a world bolshevism, a world capitalism; we have seen the summit of all folly — a world crisis which originated in over-production and was followed by unemployment. Out of the universal mists of our time we have seen the fantastic contours of a world-godlessness rising up, and now we are watching the ever clearer outlines of the modern totalitarian state taking shape — setting itself in the place of God. One after another of these beasts has

raised his head, coming to the surface amid the distant vapours and stormy sea of the nations." But the prophet sees another reality. "Above the sea and above the beasts appears a throne that is like a fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire" (Dan. 7, 9.). And on the throne there sits one: "Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool" (Dan. 7, 9.). "Isn't God speaking to us there? . . . Why do the beasts that rise up from the abyss frighten us so sorely? Is it not because they assume a divine appearance, because they make absolute claims, because they behave as if they were eternal, as if they sat on the ultimate and highest throne?" And of that the prophet says, "They have their appointed season and time." (Dan. 7, 11 & 12.) "The beasts live as long, and only as long, as the Ancient on the Throne allows. We must realize that God's throne is set up over the nations and their rulers. All these nations and rulers are not heading for the fulfilment of their will and imagination, but for that which the "Ancient on the Throne" has ordained for them. And the victory of this or that beast over another beast is not decided by this, but by the will of the "Ancient" who sits on the throne high above them all. But in the last resort not one of the beasts will be victorious, however mightily or long it may rule: the One on the throne remains the final Conqueror of all conquerors. All the beasts will lie at his feet. "Yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time." "It is God who triumphs, and not we men."

"The pangs that sweep over the Church to-day, and come like death-throes upon the believing fellowship, are the birth-pangs of the Last Day, 'when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in my Father's House'. The storms which have arisen may come as autumn storms; but for Christ and his Kingdom they are spring storms. Our vision in God's word is not of the 'decline of the west' but of 'the breaking in of the Kingdom of God'."

"The true Church is world history, as God teaches us to read it. It is world history of quite another kind from what we are accustomed to see and interpret. We are accustomed to view world history from beneath upwards, and to edify ourselves with the thought of how individuals and nations rise up from below, higher and higher from small beginnings, thanks to their ability and strength. But God teaches us to interpret world history in the opposite direction — from above downwards. He shows us that with both individuals and nations, the one that rises up must always come down again. From God's point of view, among all those who ascend there is not one who does not finally fall down."

"God shows to the world the King, who is to have the dominion over it, as a defenceless child, naked, lying in a simple crib . . . Right into the fray, under the hooves of the rams and he-goats of the world, God sends the Lamb." "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" "There on the cross is the victorious Church. In the world the victorious Church has the form of a Lamb."

The Church has the nature of a Lamb. The Church is utter defencelessness. The Church is utter purity, is simplest innocence and truthfulness. The Church demands readiness for the most complete sacrifice. The Church is found *only* on the side of Jesus Christ, and nowhere else. His way, and therefore her way, is poverty from the manger right

to the cross. His will, as the peace and justice of the coming Kingdom, is the Father's will, and to *do* it are they both, Christ and his Church, resolved. So just as he is one with the Father, so ought also those who follow him to be one with him and with one another. Jesus' victory over death led to the pouring out of the Holy Spirit and there the miracle happened. The Church came into being; they all became *one* heart and *one* mind, and none said of his goods that they were his property! To go this way the Church has come to a clear decision covering her whole attitude to life. He who does not take this way does not know Christ.

Here a criticism of Lüthi's book is necessary. A Church that does not, in the strength of God, go this way is following not Christ but the spirit of the world, the spirit of the times, and is identical with Nebuchadnezzar. We must call out, in the confusion of tongues of our days, that it is not the name which constitutes a Christian, even though he be baptized; it is deeds filled with power of the Holy Spirit.

In this age the Church stands for ever before a decision, and for ever, therefore, is struggling. Each moment demands fresh decision. From all sides the powers come storming in; and not alone the outward powers, although these are included, but far more to be feared — the evil powers of the spirit! For wheresoever God works, and where his Spirit brings the Church into being, there the devil and all his evil powers attack the harder. To this fight the Church is ordained. "But we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world — against anonymous forces. Who will strive against the entrenched force of the underworld?" Here avails no weapon which one grasps with the fist. Yes, not even one's own spirit offers a weapon in this dismal fight. "A battle rages in the air, in which no individual or nation will be victorious through 'arms of might'." But how will victory be decided in this fight in the atmospheres? And how can we be victorious?

"This spiritual battle is already decided. The decision has been fought out and has resulted in the victory of God. Yes, the victory is won. The Victor over all victors, to whom is given all power in heaven and on earth. . . He has seen Satan falling down from heaven." (Dan. 8.) "The decision in the air has taken place on the Cross. And there above the Cross there hung such a heavy atmosphere that the sun lost its brilliance in the bright noontide. But like a flaming sword, cutting through the thickest mist that has ever been, comes the word, 'It is finished!'"

"Christ is arisen!" The Resurrected One comes near to us in the reality of his Holy Ghost. There comes streaming to us, in him, the strength which enables us to conquer all the evil powers, the strength which alone is able to win the battle of the atmospheres. The atmosphere of the Holy Ghost is the life-breath of the Church.

GEORG BARTH

Editorial Notes and Comments

The thing which is foremost in our minds now that we are living in war conditions is the question of the right attitude of Christians to the state in general, and to the war in particular. There is a great deal of controversy about this vital question, which is to-day not so much merely a theoretical problem but, through conscription, has become a very real and practical issue. As a Christian community, the Society of Brothers feels urged to speak at this moment — and to speak clearly. We therefore publish as our first article an address given by Eberhard Arnold on the subject of the state, which will in its outspokenness be a challenge to many and will stir up positive and negative reactions among our readers as a sign of the pugnacity of its message: that the state, though ordained by God for a sinful world, has become an instrument of the Anti-God, the Prince of Evil, and that all true Christians therefore have to refuse obedience to it as far as it claims anything which is outside the realm of love.

We believe that 'Christians and the State' is the best answer to some of the rather unclear statements by Herbert G. Wood in his article on 'Quakerism and War', in that it sets forth the incompatibility of *any* service in war with the spirit of the Gospels. As Paul says at the end of the famous (and so infamously misinterpreted) Chapter XIII, Romans: "Owe no man anything but *to love* one another. . . Love worketh no ill against his neighbour; therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law".

Francis of Assisi has always been of deep significance to us: for the reasons set out so clearly by Laurence Housman, and, if I may say so at the outset, for an additional one — his love for "Lady Poverty" and (which is the same) his love for his fellow-creatures, whether man, beast or plant. The creation and the incarnation are in essence the same — and both find their fulfilment in the coming order of brotherhood, in the realm of God. Art in its truest sense, however, is more than imitation, more than playing. It is LIFE itself, as a new creation and incarnation of God in the brotherhood of man. In *that* sense, community is art, art in its truest sense. "There is no wealth but life", said Ruskin; and we may add, "There is no ART but LIFE".

The idea of creating an agricultural centre for training, as set forth in the 'Community Service' column on page 32, is a good one. But we should always have in mind that much more is needed now than "communities", "training centres", discussions on Federal Union and so forth. We need the dedication of our whole lives, head and hand, for true brotherhood — NOW.

THE EDITOR.

CONCERNING THE BRUDERHOF COMMUNITIES

The spreading of the message

During the past six months, since the outbreak of war, hardly a week has gone by without two or more of our members visiting friends and addressing meetings up and down the country. For this we feel deeply thankful—for what is the use of a community without a “sending out”? What is the use of a message which is not delivered? Hardly ever have we felt a greater or more pressing urge than during recent months to preach, yes, to shout and to cry to men: “There *is* a way of love and justice for all, if men would only repent, if they would only turn about by one hundred and eighty degrees—for *God* is near!”

These journeys have led us in the immediate neighbourhood to Swindon, Cirencester, Cheltenham, Stroud, Gloucester, Bristol and Bath; farther afield to London, Birmingham, Oxford, Barnet, Kettering, High Wycombe, Maidenhead, Bournemouth, Brighton, Cambridge, Ipswich and East Anglia; and north to Leicester, Wolverhampton, Rochdale, Manchester, Preston, Lancaster, Morecambe and Kendal. About thirty-five meetings were held, and a great number of friends visited privately. Stanley Fletcher, Bruce Sumner, J. Heinrich Arnold and Eberhard C. H. Arnold were mainly engaged in speaking, while many others, including Cyril Harries, Guy Johnson, Arnold Mason, Hermann Arnold, Jan Fros, Sydney Hindley, Francis Beels, George Vigar, Peter Mathis, Lloyd Jones, Wilhelm Kluever and Gerhard Wiegand made a great number of private calls. We wish to thank our friends for their help and support, especially in the warm and heartfelt welcome they gave our brothers.

J. Heinrich Arnold’s article, “Christ or Civilization?” (p. 19), is the fruit of perhaps the most important of our outside activities during these months. It will be available as an extra print at 6d per dozen copies, because it deals with questions of general interest to all our friends, sympathizers and would-be members.

Growth of the communities

At the beginning of March, twelve novices (that is, new members who have been passing through a time of testing their will for community, for a period ranging from six to eighteen months) were taken into full membership for life. There are now one hundred and thirty active members in Oaksey and Ashton Keynes. The noviciate, strengthened by fourteen newcomers since September last, now numbers nineteen, and there are four adolescents among us who wish eventually to join

fully with the Brotherhood, making a total of one hundred and fifty-three fully-surrendered members and would-be members. With one hundred and thirty children and thirty-five guests and helpers, three hundred and eighteen men, women and children were living at both communities at the beginning of March, 1940, eighty-four at the Oaksey Bruderhof Community and two hundred and thirty-four at the Cotswold Bruderhof Community. How few in face of the great need of the world; and how few compared with the greatness of the task!

Our members and the Tribunals

In a twofold way the war has affected our members. The German members had to prove their 'friendliness' to the country of their refuge, to the Tribunals for 'enemy aliens'. The result has been the full recognition of their being refugees from Nazi Germany on account of their religious faith, and consequently full exemption from all restrictions imposed on Germans and Austrians at the outbreak of war. We are most grateful to the government for their kind and considerate treatment, which enables us to devote all our resources to the prosecution not of war but of peace and brotherhood among men, which we feel is the best expression of gratitude we can give to this country.

Our task excludes all participation in war and destruction, just as much as it excludes all the material selfishness of private property and all the isolation of "private" life, which is stolen from God and our fellowmen. In consequence of this, five of our members who were called up have registered as conscientious objectors to all forms of military or semi-military service. One of them has since been unconditionally exempted from all services in connection with the war, and the others expect to appear before the Tribunals in the near future. The members concerned are Bruce Sumner, Reginald Lacy, Walter Bennett, Alan Stevenson and Philip Britts (whose case has already been decided).

In this connection we wish to emphasize that the pure negation of war is in itself no solution to the compelling problems of our time. Only if our lives are completely under the guidance of that positive quality LOVE (which is a very practical thing) do we fulfil the LAW as a *God*-given ordinance; and then — and only then — we can and must refuse anything which the LAW of the state demands of us, if it is incompatible with LOVE.

Practical progress

Since our last full report in the summer of 1939, there has been a great deal of forward movement in the economic sphere of the Bruderhof communities. The considerable increase of land in 1938-39 from 300 acres to 820 acres has been consolidated, and new activities have arisen from this increase, as for instance a vegetable, poultry and

bread round in Swindon inaugurated last autumn, a milk round in Wroughton and Swindon, the milling of our own wheat and rye flour, etc.

A full description of the activities of the Brotherhood, dealing with all the various departments, such as farm and garden, building, household duties, children's work, craftwork, publishing and all work connected with book production; workshops, office, social work, mission etc. is being published, and will be obtainable at the price of 1/-. It will also include our latest accounts and balance sheet.

If any of our friends care to help circularize our publications or sell our craftwork among their circle of friends, we shall be most grateful, and will gladly send them our new book list and illustrated craftwork list and samples.

New publications

Among the other publications of the Plough Publishing House, the most important is "The Peace of God" by Eberhard Arnold (price 2/9 paper cover; 4/- bound). During the September crisis of 1938, a short extract from this book was printed and circulated, and 30,000 copies found a reception in Britain, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden and Germany. Another extract appears on p. 7 of this number of 'The Plough'. The book deals with the peace prophecies of the Old Testament, with the attitude of the apostolic Church and of the first two centuries of Christianity towards war, and tries to show clearly that there is a vital connection between inward peace and outward peace, between social justice and international justice. It shows that life is a whole, and cannot be separated into departments.

The summer number of 'The Plough' will be a special double number, commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the community in Sannerz, Germany. It will deal especially with the history and early growth of the Bruderhof communities, which we feel may be of particular importance and interest at this time when many other communities are struggling into existence. This number will be sold at the usual price to subscribers, but will also be printed as an extra booklet at 2/6 per copy.

Other publications (in addition to the annual report already mentioned; and the reprint of the article "Christ or Civilization?") are a new leaflet outlining the basis and life of the communities, and prospectuses of craftwork and of books.

Community Notes and News

Many who are now becoming interested in the idea of community life have no practical experience of work on the land, nor is it certain that they have all a vocation for the life they seek. The immediate need seems to lie in the direction of a training centre where candidates for community can acquire the rudiments of food growing, poultry keeping, dairy farming, bee keeping and simple communal industries while living and working in a community pattern. Although such a centre would not constitute a community, it would provide a useful training and discipline in life as well as in work. Those who emerged from apprenticeship at the centre would have something tangible to bring to the service of any established group. Some indeed might go out to form new groups around the nucleus of their experience. Untried groups might also send one or two of their members to such a centre to acquire working technique. It would strengthen the purpose and the spirit of the place if refugees and 'conscience victims' could work together. While to an extent a colony of this kind would evolve its own institutions it would call for guidance, counsel, and supervision of a mature, responsible and experienced group at the core with wide sympathies and practical knowledge. It is hoped that a training settlement of this kind will be opening in February at Moore Place, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex and that it will assist in the immediate problems that many pacifists are facing while, at the same time, making some contribution to the coming development of community life and work.

The Community Service Committee have received many requests for a news sheet that will give current news from community groups in all parts. It is hoped that a simple broadsheet will be issued from time to time and that this will be useful in supplementing the work already being done through magazines issued by the larger groups. The first issue will include a survey of some of the activities that have taken shape since the autumn. A fuller outline will be found in the new edition of "Community in Britain". Enquiries and news for publication should be sent to the editor, Miss G. M. Faulding, 22 Westbourne Terrace Road, London, W.2, or to Hon. Sec. at address below. Groups are invited to circulate the broadsheet to their own contacts. It will be obtainable at a nominal price covering cost of printing.

Readers who possess copies of the original "Community in Britain" will be interested to mark the widening of community thought and activity indicated by the new edition now at press. The 1940 book will be larger than its predecessor and the previous information has been revised as far as possible to date, supplemented with descriptions of more recently formed groups and given body and perspective by a number of new appendices relating community to the wider aspects of life. Many orders are being received and it will assist if these can be sent as early as possible. In spite of increased production costs, the book will be available at the original price (2/3 post free).

Correspondence, enquiries, donations and requests for literature to Hon. Sec., "Chancton", Dartnell Park, West Byfleet, Surrey. Return postage please where reply is indicated.

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