

EBERHARD ARNOLD



*Writings Selected
With an Introduction by*

[JOHANN CHRISTOPH ARNOLD]

MODERN SPIRITUAL MASTERS SERIES

EBERHARD ARNOLD

Writings Selected

with an Introduction

by Johann Christoph Arnold

PLEASE SHARE THIS E-BOOK with your friends. Feel free to e-mail it or print it in its entirety or in part, but please do not alter it in any way. If you wish to make multiple copies for wider distribution, or to reprint portions in a newsletter or periodical, please observe the following restrictions:

- You may not reproduce it for commercial gain.
- You must include this credit line: “Copyright 2007 by Plough Publishing House. Used with permission.”

Note to the Reader

Apart from the essay “Why We Live in Community”, all of the selections in this book were excerpted from much longer pieces, and may represent only a small part of the original.

This e-book is a publication of Plough Publishing House, Farmington, PA 15437 USA (www.plough.com) and Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5DR, UK (www.ploughbooks.co.uk) by arrangement with Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0308, USA

*Copyright © 2007 by Plough Publishing House
Farmington, PA 15437 USA*

All Rights Reserved

Contents

Introduction	7
1 GOD'S REVOLUTION	32
A Call to the Inner Life	32
God's Revolution	38
Against Bloodshed and Violence	44
2 THE NEW JUSTICE	53
Not a New Law	53
Away from Compromise and Shadow	63
God's Kingdom - Future and Present	70
3 BECOMING HUMAN	80
The Better Righteousness	81
The Conscience	84
4 UNLESS YOU BECOME A CHILD	93

5	LOVE DIVINE AND LOVE HUMAN	98
	Responsibility, Desire, and Love	108
	The New Morality	111
6	LOVE IS WORK	115
	Community as Work	117
	Jesus and the Future State	122
7	FROM ISOLATION TO COMMUNITY	128
	Consciousness and Community	129
	From Private Property to community	145
	Why We Live in Community	153
8	THE FIGHT AGAINST MAMMON	172
	God or Mammon	172
	The Fight Against Mammon	175
9	GOD WITH US	182
	The Experience of God	183
	The Spirit of the Risen One	190
	The Living Word	194

10	THE CHURCH COMES DOWN TO US	200
	Unity	206
11	CHURCH AND STATE	212
	The New Incarnation	212
	Church and State	217
12	EXPECTATION	226
	Now Is the Time	229
	FOR FURTHER READING	236

Arnold's significance is not limited to his relatively small community. Some day the whole family of humankind will recognize what Eberhard Arnold means for the spiritual renewal of man in these dark and troubled times. God sent him as a light into the darkness, to show erring man the right way and the true goal.

*Pitter Premysl, General Secretary
Christian Communists, Prague, 1935.*

Introduction

“Blessed are they who die in the Lord;
their works follow after them.”

Widely sought after as a writer and lecturer in his day, Eberhard Arnold remains largely unknown to modern readers. Small but growing numbers of readers, however, are discovering the relevance of his work, which Thomas Merton said “stirs to repentance and renewal.”

Though he was my grandfather, I never met him. He died at fifty-two, five years before I was born, but I feel as though I have always known him - both through my grandmother’s radiant memories of their life together, and through his heavily-underlined books, which my father inherited.

Much more than a writer, philosopher, and theologian, he was loved most of all for his humility, his fatherly

friendship, and his deep faith. Born in 1883 into a long line of academics, his life was hardly conventional. In a time and place where church and state were anything but separate, he threw away what might have been a brilliant career when he left the state church at age twenty-five. By thirty-seven, he had abandoned middle-class life altogether. He spent his last fifteen years at the Bruderhof - the religious community he founded in 1920 - but remained active in traveling, lecturing and writing until his death in 1935.

Little of what he wrote is available to readers today: only a small number of the thousands of talks, essays, and letters he left behind have ever been published in English. In a certain way, however, this would cause him no dismay: especially toward the end of his life, he spoke often of his own inadequacies, pointing instead to the working of the Holy Spirit. And yet his witness, however small, cannot be left unrecognized. His insights into the human condition are as relevant today as they were in the early twenties, and his call to discipleship rings as true now as it did then.

What was his message, and how did he arrive at his radical faith? His own words, spoken in 1933, say it best:

In my youth, I tried to lead people to Jesus through studying the Bible, and through lectures, talks and discussions.

But there came a time when I recognized that this was no longer enough. I began to see the tremendous power of mammon, of discord, of hate, and of the sword: the hard boot of the oppressor upon the neck of the oppressed. I saw that dedication to the soul alone did not fulfill all of Jesus' commandments; he wanted us to care for men's bodies as well.

From 1913 to 1917 my wife, Emmy, and I sought painfully for an understanding of the truth. Shortly before the outbreak of the war, I had written to a friend saying that I could not go on. I had preached the gospel, but felt that I needed to do more. The cause of Jesus was more than just a meeting of individual souls; it had to become a tangible, real-life experience! So we searched everywhere: not only in old writings - in the Sermon on the Mount and in other scriptures - but also in books about the working class and their oppression by the economic and social order. We wanted to find the way of Jesus, of Francis of Assisi; the way of the prophets.

The war years brought unforgettable horrors. One young officer came back with both of his legs shot off. He came home to his fiancée, hoping to receive the loving care he needed so badly from her, and she informed him that she had become engaged to a man with a healthy body.

Then the time of hunger came to Berlin. People ate turnips morning, noon and night. And when they turned to the officials for money or food, they were told to eat more turnips. At the same time, well-to-do "Christian" families in the middle of the city were able to keep cows and had milk! In 1917 I saw a horse fall in the street. The

driver was knocked aside by a mob of men who rushed in to cut pieces of meat from its warm body - they had to bring something home to their children and wives! Dead children were carted through the streets wrapped in newspapers; there was neither time nor money for coffins.

It was during this time that I visited a woman in a basement dwelling. Water ran down the walls of her cellar, and the only window in the room was closed because it opened to the street above. She had tuberculosis but could not afford isolation; her relatives lived in the same room with her. I offered to find another dwelling for her, but she refused - she wanted to die where she had always lived. And she was already a corpse!

Gradually it became clear to us that the way of Jesus was practical and tangible. It was more than concern for the soul. It said, very simply: "If you have two coats, give to him who has none. Give food to the hungry, and do not turn away from your neighbor when he needs you. When asked for an hour's work, give two. Strive for justice. If you want to marry and start a family, then see that those around you can do the same. If you seek education and work, make these available to others also. And if it is your duty to care for your own health, then fulfill this duty to others. Treat them as you would treat yourself. Enter through the narrow gate, for it is the only way to the Kingdom of God."

We knew that we had to become as poor as beggars - that we, like Jesus, had to take upon ourselves the whole need of men. We had to hunger for justice more than for water and bread. We knew we would be persecuted for the sake of this justice, but our righteousness would be greater

than that of the moralists and theologians. And we would be filled with fire from above: we would receive the Holy Spirit.

But we could not endure the life that we were living any longer.

My grandfather practiced what he preached, and by 1920 he and my grandmother, with five young children, had left their comfortable suburb of Berlin-Steglitz for a dilapidated villa in the Rhön mountains. This move was more than just a geographic relocation; it was a radical change of life. Though the years ahead would be ones of grinding poverty, the Arnolds would never again be held back by financial worry. The Sermon on the Mount was not merely an ideal, but a way to live. From now on their house would be open to the destitute; their lives would be consumed in caring not only for souls but bodies as well.

To their friends, this was madness; to them, it was an “opportunity for love and joy.” But rash as it seemed, their move from Berlin - as their earlier move away from the state church - was a step taken in faith; or rather, as my grandmother often said, a leap:

We had no financial basis of any kind for realizing our dreams of starting a new life. But that made no difference. It was time to turn our backs on the past, and start afresh... to burn all our bridges, and put our trust entirely in God -

like the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. This trust was to be our foundation - the surest foundation, we felt, on which to build.

Eberhard's spiritual quest had already begun years earlier when, as a teenager on summer vacation at the home of his mother's cousin, he had begun to read the New Testament. This relative, a Lutheran pastor who had once sided with local weavers during a labor dispute, impressed him considerably. By the time he returned home he had become aware that his clothes were better than those of many other classmates, and that when his parents held a party, they invited only their coterie of well-to-do academics - and not the poor of the street. His questions about these matters infuriated his father, but he remained undeterred. Were Jesus' words metaphor only? Sooner or later, he must find out.

In the years to follow he estranged himself from his schoolmates as well: he took his new-found faith so seriously that he sought out former teachers and begged their forgiveness for his previous unruly and dishonest behavior. By the time he was a university student, however, his fervor no longer caused embarrassment: Dwight L. Moody's religious revival was now sweeping Germany, and his enthusiasm for its cause soon gained him popularity as both a writer and speaker.

It was around this time that he first met my grandmother, Emmy von Hollander -known to us children as “Oma.” The daughter of a law professor, she shared Eberhard’s social and intellectual background, and like him was active in the revival movement. Within a month, the two were engaged. They would remain together until his death, twenty-eight years later.

It was during this same time in 1907 that the question of baptism emerged as a central theme. Many young adults felt that their christening had made them heirs to a culture but not a faith, and so began to have themselves re-baptized. Characteristically, Eberhard cautioned Emmy to test everything in prayer. The issues were complex and required careful consideration:

To me it seems almost certain that baptism of believers is biblical. But the question is complicated, and we must test it slowly and objectively. Let us say nothing until we have reached incontestable clarity. Let us search honestly and thoroughly for the will of God, and then act accordingly. Either way, however, we shall not be moved one millimeter from the center. What we need is Jesus - nothing else!

In the end, thorough study convinced the young couple that the baptism intended by Jesus meant baptism of believing adults - not infants - and both were baptized in 1908.

The consequences were swift: Eberhard was denied the opportunity to sit for his exams in theology, and he was forbidden to meet Emmy for one year. This punishment was painful, but he and Emmy had expected nothing less. Their baptism was a declaration of war against the state church, and as such was no small matter - least of all for a young man whose father was professor of church history, and whose name was synonymous with good society. As always, however, he exhorted Emmy to persevere in faith:

This momentous decision will give our life a sharply-defined direction, laden with suffering... What will happen only the Lord knows, but that is sufficient. I know with certainty that Jesus will lead us excellently!

The years that followed were tumultuous. Eberhard was forced to change his course of study to philosophy; he wrote his thesis on Nietzsche and earned his doctoral degree in 1909. He and Emmy were married the same year, and their house soon became a gathering place for all kinds of writers, students, and radicals.

War came in 1914, and although Eberhard was called to the front, he was discharged within weeks on account of his tuberculosis. He supported the war effort with nationalistic fervor all the same, publishing propaganda as the newly-hired editor of a magazine run by one of

his boyhood friends. As the war dragged on, however, he became increasingly disillusioned, and by 1917 he was a convinced pacifist.

Even earlier, his chief concern had been the care of the soul, as this statement on the ultimate goals of his literary work shows:

The name of our publishing house, Die Furche (“furrow”) should be a powerful admonition to inner deepening. A furrow is something that has been plowed up and opened; such an opening must precede every sowing. Only where the plow of God has exposed the inner life can such a sowing bear fruit. A deepening of the inner life can be brought about only by the plowing of repentance - that inner revolution and re-evaluation which leads to metanoia - a fundamental transformation of mind and heart.

His views were not shared by all, however, and over the next two years it became clear to him that his calling was no longer one with that of the publishing house. By 1919, his insistence that Christ’s teachings were meant to be practiced in daily life was causing increasing controversy with the directors of *Die Furche*. Emmy writes:

There were always tensions at work. Everyone could appreciate the confusion of the youth, a result of the suffering of the war and then the turmoil of revolution.

But while some wanted to lead them back onto the beaten track of pietism, others - Eberhard among them - saw public events with an entirely new eye. They had learned a lesson from the blatant inequalities between rich and poor, from the war psychosis they had so painfully observed. They believed they had to go an entirely different way: the way of Jesus, the way of the Sermon on the Mount.

The years that followed brought widespread social change. In much the same way as American hippies rebelled against the complacent affluence of their parents during the Vietnam War, young people in the Weimar Republic turned their backs on the social conservatism and aristocratic pretensions of the failed Prussian empire.

Thousands of them left the cities for the country, roaming farms and mountains in their search for truth and meaning in life. They lacked no diversity in background and opinion, but held in common the belief that old structures and conventions must die and finally give way to something new. And although many of them soon drifted into the hedonism and moral decay that characterized the post-war period, others, like my grandparents, saw in the *Youth Movement* an affirmation of their spiritual quest for wholeness.

* The Free German Youth Movement of the early 1920s, not the Hitler Youth of the mid- 1930s.

The *Youth Movement* sought answers to life's questions in the simplicity of rural life, in the trees and mountains and meadows, and in the poetry and literature of the romantics. They rejected the crass materialism of the cities in favor of the rural life, with its simple pleasures of folk-dancing and hiking, and turned their backs on the sterility of factory life to embrace the hard work - and the stench - of the farm. For them, the collapse of civilization as they knew it was proof of man's need for nature, and for God.

But it was the question of separating the spiritual from the material that brought about the birth of Sannerz, the religious community my grandparents founded in 1920. To them, life could not be lived in fragments. Everything was connected: work and leisure, family and friends, religion and politics - all these had to become one. Repentance could not effect change in one area while leaving another untouched. And if one sphere of life was to be influenced and molded by God, then all other spheres must be influenced by him as well.

It was this recognition that led them to leave Berlin for a new life in the impoverished farming district of Fulda, opening their doors to wandering musicians, artists, anarchists, and tramps. If the words of Jesus could be lived out in the first century, they could be lived out again now; if Christ could pour out his spirit on earth two thousand years ago, it could happen again

today. Such was their faith as they ventured to create a community of work and of goods: a life in which everything belonged to all and yet to none.

This determination to apply the Gospel in practical ways led to my grandfather's final resignation from Die Furche during the spring of 1920. By June of the same year, he and Oma had moved into the storage rooms of Gasthaus Lotzenius, an inn in the small village of Sannerz.

Within weeks, however, my grandfather was publishing again. He had no money and only a tiny staff, but he felt compelled to publicize as widely as possible the truths that he and my grandmother, with the small circle that gathered around them at Sannerz, had begun to recognize. Formulating his thoughts that August, he wrote:

The task and mission of our publishing work is to proclaim living renewal, to summon people to the actions of Christ; to disseminate the thinking of Jesus in the midst of national and social distress; to apply Christianity publicly; to testify to God's action in present history. It is not a church question - it is a religious question. We must face the deepest forces of Christianity and recognize them as indispensable in the solution of the crucial problems in contemporary culture. With breadth of vision and with energetic daring, our publishing house will steer its course into the torrent of present-day thought. Its work in fields that are apparently religiously neutral will gain for us relationships leading to our greatest tasks in life.

Already at this stage, my grandfather was an established writer. He had numerous books and articles to his name, and definite ideas for even more ambitious projects. Aside from continued lecturing and writing, he planned to publish a series of books devoted to the great Christian thinkers Zinzendorf, Kierkegaard, Augustine, and Dostoyevsky, as well as books on German woman mystics, Tertullian, and the Christians of the first and second centuries.

By September, however, his co-editor Otto Herpel had resigned, unable to agree to a document stating that the new publishing venture would call only on those writers whose articles were written “in Christ, of Christ, and toward Christ.” Eberhard had become “too pietistic,” even for his best friends.

He was hardly deterred by these disappointments, however, and plunged even more feverishly into the work of building up Sannerz and the publishing house. As he put it, any apparent defeat in the face of partisan socialism and religious politics was “in actual fact a victory for the decisive spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.”

Sannerz grew rapidly over the next two years. Business was relatively good, and dozens of articles, pamphlets, and books were written, edited, and produced. Yet the publishing work was only part of the community’s mission. The founders of Sannerz believed strongly that

community was the solution to all of life's questions: economic, social, educational, political, and sexual issues were all addressed and fully answered by the common life. Even more, then, the literary achievements of the first years at Sannerz are staggering, considering the interruptions by the two thousand visitors who came in 1921, as well as the farm work and household chores that had to be done.

But the summer of 1922 brought trouble: while travelling in Holland, Eberhard was notified by telephone that the shareholders of his fledgling publishing house had met to liquidate the firm. They accused him of financial irresponsibility, idealism, and even fraud.

The crisis erupted over the management of the community's publishing house. My grandparents had left Sannerz several weeks earlier to visit a sister community in Holland, but while they were gone inflation had suddenly soared, and loans that had not been due for months were suddenly recalled. The community back home at Sannerz panicked, but my grandparents advised inner calm. To them, the words of Jesus about the lilies and the birds were not mere poetry; they were a mandate for the disciple's life.

In the end, a friend surprised them with a large envelope of guilders which, when converted to marks, came to the exact amount due at the bank the next day. Inflation had been on their side, and more importantly, their faith

had been rewarded. Too late, however, they returned home to find the publishing venture liquidated - by the very friends they had left in charge.

More than forty people left Sannerz in the following weeks, all firmly convinced that spiritual and temporal matters could not and should not be mixed. The “experiment” was over: people were too weak, too human, too selfish to live by faith. Yet for my grandparents, Sannerz had been no experiment: it was a calling, and they would hold fast to it.

Within weeks, there was a complete split between those to whom faith was merely a ideal, and those to whom it was a living reality that had to determine every decision and every action.

In addition to splitting the circle at Sannerz, those who left also divided the publishing house. They took with them both office equipment and several best-selling titles, including the periodical, which they began to put out under a new name only months later.

The crisis was especially painful because of the bitter and slanderous accusations with which so many people left Sannerz. But as a shareholder admitted during the liquidation proceedings in August, Eberhard had done nothing dishonest. It was simply a matter of faith versus economic considerations: “What separates Eberhard Arnold from the rest of us is his conviction that faith

must determine all relationships, including financial ones.”

Years later, a Vienna newspaper would agree, stating that Eberhard Arnold was one of the very few publishers who not only published religious works, but dared to apply their message in his own life. This was the heart of his vision. The spiritual had to penetrate and transform the material, for Christ intended not only words but deeds: “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.”

Thus my grandparents rejected the notion that their community was an escape - that they had isolated themselves from the problems of society. True, the people who joined Sannerz had removed themselves from the mainstream of modern life, but only to the extent that they could live unfettered by it. Their ultimate goal was to remain a corrective in a world that had gone badly awry: to be, in the words of Jesus, salt and light.

Yet my grandfather never saw himself as unique or capable. His discipleship was uncompromising, but never self-satisfied; he saw himself as nothing other than the servant of a higher cause. He always sought out the truth in others. And he saw the community he guided not as a lifestyle or institution, but as a free-flowing movement that was driven by - and that would die without - the wind of the Holy Spirit.

Looking back on the first years at Sannerz, he later said:

At that time none of us was so narrow-minded as to fail to appreciate the work of God in other people and in other spiritual movements. Perhaps our danger was rather in the opposite direction - that for some time we held back from expressing certain insights into God's ultimate truth, in order to avoid putting pressure on people who had not yet been awakened or called.

We were certain that these people had been struck by God - that they were in the midst of a mighty movement of heart. But they had not yet fully grasped what God wanted in the shaking of their souls, and so we spoke with them only about those things which moved them at that moment. We did not force on them things to which their hearts had not yet opened.

So it was that many spiritual movements came to us. And we were not such foolish missionaries as to say that Buddhism was of the devil or Lao-tse the Antichrist. We recognized God's spirit at work in Buddha and Lao-tse. And because we recognized this, we ourselves were animated by what they brought to us from God - even if they spoke in strange tongues.

Thus we did not speak of mission in the sense of going out to people. There was so much life in the house - so much coming and going - that we were a mission station already, in the midst of heathen Germany. But it was never that we were the converters and the others the ones to be converted. Rather, we recognized the Holy Spirit at work.

The rooms at Sannerz were filled with a power that did not come from us, nor from those who visited us. It was a

power that came from God. People brought it with them, and they in turn felt it in us. But neither they nor we possessed this power; rather, it surrounded us like an invisible fluid, like the wind of the spirit that visited the waiting apostles at Pentecost.

This power did not adhere to particular people. It could not be possessed or held fast, or used for gain or profit. It was an event, a happening, an occurrence; it was history. It was a manifestation of the eternal and everlasting in time and space. It was a communication with a primal force, which we could never have explained in a human or logical way. That was the secret of those times. There was something at work that was more than psychic; something that could not be explained in terms of emotions. It was something spiritual - something of the Holy Spirit.

But we never thought then - it would have seemed a kind of craziness to us! - that only people like us, or even just the handful of people at Sannerz, were visited by God's Spirit, or were illuminated by the Spirit of Christ. To the contrary, we felt the blowing of the Spirit in all people and all places. The important thing for us was to feel this breath of God and to recognize it.

We ourselves had to live according to the calling that had come to us from the words and life of Jesus, from the prophetic image of God's future kingdom. We had to be true to this calling to the end. We believed we could best serve all those who were touched by the breath of God by living out the reality of our ultimate cause: the objectivity of God's will, and the content and character of his kingdom.

We were called nature lovers - people said that we

wanted to go “back to nature” - but that is not at all what we wanted. To the contrary, we looked beyond nature itself and to the divine at work within it. The greatest thing in our movement was that the Creator was honored in his creation. We were not sun-worshippers, but we had an inner feeling for the symbolism of the sun and for the kind of Creator who must have created it...

It may seem strange that such an insignificant group could experience such lofty feelings of peace and community, but it was so. It was a gift from God. And only one antipathy was bound up in our love - a rejection of the systems of civilization; a hatred of the falsities of social stratification; an antagonism to the spirit of impurity; an opposition to the moral coercion of the clergy. The fight that we took up was a fight against these alien spirits. It was a fight for the Spirit of God and Jesus Christ.

By 1931, however, the movement of heart that had swept Germany only a decade earlier had all but dried up. So my grandfather looked farther afield, visiting the Hutterites of Canada and the mid-western United States. Rooted in 16th -Century Moravia, this group still lived in small communities, sharing all things in common. They were perhaps too narrow-minded and dogmatic for his liking, but they nevertheless represented the purest form of communal Christianity he had ever met. And so he joined hands with their four-hundred-year-old movement after a year of careful consideration.

He had immediately recognized the danger of their conservative pietism, but emphasized that he was attracted not to the 20th century Hutterianism but to the Hutterianism of the 16th century - that movement of faith that had left behind thousands of martyrs. Also, he had never wanted to found his own sect, but again and again sought to join with like-minded groups. And by 1931 he somehow sensed that he would not live much longer. He had seen numerous community attempts collapse and had been amazed to find that the Hutterites were still living in community after 400 years. Joining them, he felt, was a safeguard for the Bruderhof.

Of his experiences in North America, he wrote:

In spite of their weaknesses, which I have openly brought to light, these American communities have kept from their 16th-century origins a spiritual vitality - a creativity in working and organizing along communal lines - that comes from the Holy Spirit...

My overall impression is that the community life of these 3500 souls is something overpoweringly great. Their spirit of community is genuine, pure, clear, and deep. There is nothing in the whole world, neither in books and writings, nor in any other present-day groups, that can be compared to the essence, character, and spirit of their brotherhood...

Though in full recognition of our own origins,

inspired by the Youth Movement, and by the Sermon on the Mount, I have decided to join forces with them. The question of financial support is of a secondary nature...

Despite my grandfather's enthusiastic adoption of early Anabaptist spirituality, however, his hopes for a close economic relationship with the North American Hutterites never materialized, both because of the great distance between Germany and Canada, and his untimely death.

The first of two Gestapo raids occurred 1933. Eberhard was not intimidated, however, and sent off reams of documents to the local Nazi officials, explaining his vision of a Germany under God. Before his death in 1935 he would write even to Hitler, urging him to renounce the ideals of National Socialism and to work instead for God's kingdom - and sending him a copy of his book *Innerland*. Not surprisingly, this letter was never answered. Later, the entire community was exiled to England and Liechtenstein; remarkably, not a single member was deported to a concentration camp.

My grandfather's death came suddenly in 1935, the result of complications following the amputation of a gangrenous leg. But as his friend, the scholar Hermann Buddensieg wrote years later, he is still very much alive today:

Do not be surprised that I talk with you as if you were still right with me. For what does the present know of what is yonder? You are not dead; no, you are alive in the Spirit...

And now we are together again, my friend, at Sannerz, in the Rhön, and in my study on the banks of the Neckar:

The people come and go, young and old, looking for refuge in their need. They are wrapped up in themselves, unnatural, cramped and stiffened, exaggerated, without a goal beyond themselves. And yet your house has an open door; no one is first asked who he is...

We work in the fields and in the house. Together we toil for an understanding of the people and events around us. I see the roguish glint in your eyes, your mischievous smile and waggish beard, your cheerful laugh when the peculiarities of human life force themselves upon us. We are often wearied with dull, commonplace talk, but we also laugh freely and heartily, in gales of truly Homeric laughter...

That was your gift. Your wit was pithy, but free of poisonous hypocrisy. You had no love for stuffiness or sweetness. About you there was no penetrating smell of "Christianity," no cliquishness, no sentimentality. To seek out heretics was just as foreign to you as was the addiction to straighten out everyone according to your own way. You valued other people as long as they were earnest, and you came to terms with the insincere. You found a way with the most pigheaded peasant and with the most stubborn "man of God." You were a brother to them when they needed you, and your manner was at all times cheerful, genuinely animated by trust.

You lived life from the center and from the depths. You

did not inherit Christ from others, but from out of your own inner experience and encounter. You were one who was truly freed by Christ, who was changed by him. You were free of anxiety. Your faith was no mere acceptance of truths, no flight of fear, but certainty. And therefore there was nothing of conventional Christianity in you, for you knew precisely that Christ was no “Christian.”

You opposed all appearance, all posturing and all self-righteousness. You were not concerned with dogma, but rather with the life of Christ, with the community of brothers and sisters in the sense of the primitive church.

You took humanity for what it is. You were as distant from illusion as from misunderstanding. You knew demonic powers and the weight of the age, but these things came to you not in isolated recognition, but as a binding call to help your brothers.

You knew the power of the church community within the great current of a completely different world. But you never recruited. Whoever was called, heard, and thus came to you; some to live with you and your friends in community; others, touched by your insight, to remain as good friends...

Let me embrace you, my friend! You are present - a witness of the new life in Christ; a man of kindness, a friend of freedom, a brother of knowing love - but yet one of such decisiveness that you discern and separate spirits.

There is no doubt that Eberhard would have disapproved of this eloquent eulogy, and thus it is fitting that this introduction end with words he spoke on his fiftieth

birthday, in July 1933. Here he is no longer just my grandfather, but a man of God - a prophetic voice in a world that needs him now more than then:

On this day I have been especially conscious of my lack of ability, of how unsuited my own nature is to the work I have been given. I have remembered how God called me when I was only sixteen, and how I have stood in his way - with the result that so much of what he wanted to do has been left unfinished. It remains a miracle nevertheless that his work has been revealed and testified to in us feeble human beings - not through our merits, but because we have been accepted again and again through the grace of Jesus and his forgiveness of sins.

I have had to think of Hermas, that early Christian writer who describes the building of the great temple - how he refers to the many stones that must be thrown away. The masons try to use them, but if they do not fit, even after their corners have been chiseled down, then they must be thrown away - as far away as possible. And even the stones that are used must first be chiseled very sharply before they can be set into the wall...

What concerns me most of all is the powerlessness of man, even of the man who has been entrusted with some task. Only God is mighty; we are completely powerless. Even for the work that has been given us, we are wholly without power. We cannot fit a single stone into the church community. We can provide no protection whatsoever for the community when it has been built up. We cannot even devote anything to the cause by our own power. We are completely without power. But just this is

why God has called us: because we know we are powerless.

It is hard to describe how our own power must be stripped off us, how our own power must be dropped, dismantled, torn down, and put away. But it must happen, and it will not happen easily - nor through any single heroic decision. Rather, it must be done in us by God.

This is the root of grace: the dismantling of our own power. Only to the degree that our own power is dismantled will God give us his Spirit. If a little power of our own rises up amongst us, the Spirit and authority of God retreats in the same moment and to the corresponding degree. This is the single most important insight regarding the kingdom of God...

The Holy Spirit produces effects that are deadly for the old life and that at the same time have a wakening and rousing power for the new. So let us use this day to give glory to God. Let us pledge to him the dismantling of our own power. Let us declare our dependence upon grace.

Johann Christoph Arnold

1

God's Revolution

A Call to the Inner Life

Despite the negative connotations the word may imply, "revolution" comes closest to describing the spiritual upheaval to which Arnold calls us. The following address was delivered in November 1917, but its message is not dated: the need for inner renewal in the face of overwhelming social and political change is as vital today as it was then. And Arnold's assertion that Bolshevism would fail to bring about peace and justice is prophetic. Certainly, the outer life has to change. But the inner life has to change first, and this change can come about only through repentance.

There is much talk today about upheaval, and in fact, we all feel that we are in the midst of the greatest upheaval humankind can experience. As a result of the war, our European civilization is undergoing a tremendous change. It is a change that brings judgement and chastisement from God over all that we thought we had so firmly under our control, and it has cast us down from the heights of presumption and pride.

The greatest changes are taking place in the economic sphere. A powerful wave of social upheaval has swept across Russia, a wave which has not yet run its course. We have no idea what kinds of change will still take place there in the distribution of wealth between rich and poor, in industry and commerce, in buying and selling. We cannot yet foresee how far the revolution in outward things will affect everything else. But one thing is certain: we need an upheaval.

Certainly most people will get no further than applying it to outward matters. They are like the Social Democrat who stated, "We have no time to spend on inner matters, for the outer ones keep us busy enough." And that is the danger for most people: because of their many cares they forget the innermost things and neglect them, and attend only to outward matters. This is perhaps the worst thing about the pressing circumstances of the present moment: those who long for change

completely overlook the inner side of life. Yet we must understand that any lasting change will have to start in the inner life.

What is great in our eyes is an abomination to God. We have preferred human honor to God's honor, and since we have raised ourselves up instead of bowing down before God, we have sunk deeply into sin and death. That is why we need an upheaval: a complete reversal, a re-valuation of all things and all values.

We proclaim Christ as divine power. Jesus is the Spirit, and where the Spirit is, there is freedom. Whoever comes under the influence of this Spirit experiences an upheaval from within, and this upheaval of the soul brings the renewal that we thirst for and need. Power from above transforms us from within and makes us capable of what we would otherwise be quite incapable of. We no longer live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Paul speaks of this when he says: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away. Everything has become new."

Laying aside the old nature and putting on the new is the only thing that can help us in these times. It is a matter of the Spirit - a matter of the rule of spirits. Outward things do not matter. It is the inner things that have power, because behind all outward powers stand spiritual forces. So if we ask ourselves in what direction

our lives should proceed, then there is only one question that matters. Which spirit will rule over us - the spirit of the world or the spirit of God? We face the great either/or, God or the devil, Christ or Satan.

Jesus is the only one who can effect a change in us - Jesus, who lived amongst us and who uncovered and unmasked our hypocrisy. Only he can change and transform all things. But we can come under his rulership, under the authority of his Spirit, only through the great upheaval of repentance.

The new birth of which he spoke to Nicodemus, the old man who came to him in the night, is repentance. And repentance is a complete revolution of life. It is conversion from the spirit of darkness to the spirit of light, redemption from all constraints and servitude, from all error and delusion. But we should not worry about how this revolution will penetrate the cultural and political life before we ourselves arrive at it quite personally.

Either we live in sin and remain in sin or we are saved from sin and, through the spirit of Jesus, die to sin and declare war on sin. For whoever is born of God does not live continually in a condition of sin. He is raised up into God's world of light, into the Spirit's world of power. He is morally renewed; has turned toward God in everything. He is awakened to a fresh and joyful life.

When Jesus proclaimed repentance, he used the word in a way that conveys action. And since Jesus added nothing else to this word but proclaimed it as a single totality, he showed us that it is a deed of entirety. There is no repentance if it is not the repentance of the whole person. There is no repentance if it is not repentance in all departments of life. There is no repentance that does not embrace the whole man, starting from the innermost being and pressing outward into all other spheres.

Repentance must start in the thought-life. Thoughts are giants that produce deeds, and if repentance has not taken place in the depths of our heart and mind, we will never be able to prove it in deeds. But when the life of self is overcome within us, through the divine life of Jesus, then there will be a complete transformation of the outer life. A total change will take place in our dealings with other people, and we will place our former friends before the same decision. If they do not accept repentance, we can no longer be at one with them.

Our repentance will stand the test in our professional lives, in our concept of duty and of work. We will flee from everything to do with Satan: the lusts of youth, the love of money, and the rulership of mammon. Our reading, our leisure, our political activity and our work will all be placed under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Repentance as upheaval! If anyone is in Christ, then

he is a new creature. The old has passed away, and everything has become new.

* * * * *

The great agitation in the world of today makes it more and more urgent to gain inner strength in those quiet encounters with Christ that make it possible for us to remain under his rule and authority. Situated as we are in the midst of a world that is so terribly unpeaceful, we need constant nourishment for our inner life. It is important to look beyond confining externals... Instead of following the alien spirits of hatred and violence, of lying, impure, and greedy possessiveness, we must follow the one spirit who alone is stronger than all other spirits...

Without a rebirth in our hearts, we will glean from fluctuating world events either a false meaning - based on material considerations or on emotional or racial ties - or no meaning at all. The course of history is interpreted falsely by very many, in the interests of their own nation or society. For most people, though, it never has any meaning at all. There is only one possible way of bringing this confusion to an end: the whole person, for the whole of life, must undergo a complete about-face toward the kingdom of God.

Rebirth is the only name we can give to such a radical change - to the complete opposite of our former life. Only through such a complete change can we see in all that happens the approach and intervention of God's rule. We can never see the kingdom of God, or have any part in it, without a rebirth of heart; without breaking down the whole structure of our life and then making a completely new start. Only a new beginning that proceeds from the very bottom - a rebirth that goes back to the root - can prepare us for the kingdom of God. We need a new foundation for our entire personal life.

If we want to avoid suffering inward shipwreck in the storm of public opinion and chaos, then our hidden inner being needs daily the quiet haven of communion with God...

Innerland

God's Revolution

“Revolution” was a catchword in the upheaval of post-World War I Germany, and Arnold took it as one of his favorite themes. “World Revolution and World Redemption” appeared first in May 1919, and by 1921 there were two more lectures of the same name. All of his life, he decried modern theology’s emphasis on “otherness” as

opposed to social responsibility. But Arnold was no Marxist, nor even a socialist. Together with Berdyaev, the Russian philosopher and theologian, he maintained that the social problems of society could not be solved apart from the spiritual ones - that without a Christ-centered renewal, the ideals of socialism were destined to fail. This article, published in 1926, is typical: it hails not to Lenin, but to the Cross.

A radical social revolution, a turning upside down of all relationships and all things in the cause of God's justice, is something we can talk about only when we feel wholeheartedly that this revolution is meant for all people.

All of us need to be turned upside down. We are all guilty of the injustices in our society and the degrading of others in personal and public relationships. And only when we dare to face this corruption squarely can any upheaval begin within us.

In the end, this revolution does not center around the oppressed, who also must be raised up to a genuine life. No, the aim of this decisive battle is essentially greater. It grasps at the root of hostility to life, of mortal sin against life, in every single human being and in public life as a whole.

God's revolution leads towards a community of justice and of goods that produces new life-values in the material and physical world just as much as in the

development of character. It is everlasting and without end; it has in its view the origin of life, which lies in eternity and infinity. Its purpose and goal is the ultimate, eternal and all-encompassing future.

We, however, are limited and restricted. We are short-lived and weak. We are base, and again and again we represent our own mortal interests. Because of this, it is evident that God's revolution can never be realized completely by people such as we are. Therefore the weapon we must choose is faith in the beginning of a new life - the weapon of the Spirit itself.

We must carry on the battle without judging or punishing our fellow human beings, and without injuring them. Our attitude to life, and the way we work, must correspond absolutely to the purity of the prophetic Spirit, to the nature of the Eternal and Infinite - to the spirit of man's ultimate calling. Only in this way will our authority be effective at all times. And we must allow this revolution to begin over and over and always more profoundly within ourselves. All of us are called to revolution, because all of us are guilty.

Only the creative Power itself can usher in the New Day. After the long day of the dinosaurs, those gigantic dragons of prehistoric times, a new day dawned. In just the same way, after the present time of degenerate and sinful man, the Son of Man must dawn, ushered in by a

revolution such as the world has never seen. But we cannot comprehend the dawn of this New Day unless we understand the witness of the prophets and the apostles.

Prophecy bears witness against all that is self-seeking, murderous, and antisocial; against all crime against life and community; against all gain through injury to another; against luxury and affluence at the expense of those who suffer want; against violence and war.

Prophecy is the most positive witness to love: to the sharing of bread, roof, and clothes with all who are hungry, homeless, and ill-clad; to the release of all people from chains, servitude, and imprisonment; to open hospitality for all wanderers and travelers; to the uprooting of the old and the planting of the new. Prophecy witnesses to the heart's purification from injustice and egocentric limitations; to forgiveness and the removal of evil; to a new heart; to the unconditional dictatorship of the Holy Spirit and the reign of Christ.

The prophet believes in the realization of the impossible through God. He is a fighter and spokesman for God's goal, and God's future is his present strength. He speaks and acts in it, and is ready to lay down his life for it. His goal is unity in God: the unity of the Spirit that gives life and breath to everything. Instead of the coercive state, he seeks the unified, all-fulfilling, and all-guiding Spirit of true community.

This Spirit was the very breath of life for the first Christians. To them, property was rooted in sin. Thus every storeroom and fund belonged to the poor. They saw it as their duty to uncover and to overcome distress; to search out and relieve poverty street by street. Their life was one of utmost simplicity, and their leaders lived like the poorest.

This attack on property as the legal foundation of economic order was consistent with the life-and-death struggle of the early church against the state's pretensions to absolute authority. The rejection of any high public office invested with judiciary power, the refusal to pass judgment on life or death or civic rights, the refusal to carry out orders to kill whether imposed by the law or the military - this rejection applied also to the highest government office, that of emperor. With this attitude, in spite of all their works of love, the first Christians remained everywhere "aliens" and "foreigners" within their society, citizens and ambassadors of a coming supra-political order.

This revolution of faith had its roots in the certainty that every single individual, and even earth's whole atmosphere and the whole of public life, would be freed from the rule of evil and taken possession of by God. In the same way today, the certainty that the New Day is drawing near calls us to a revolution that turns everything

upside down. Just now, when most people have chosen a patient acceptance of evolution, when people have resigned and adapted themselves to the fact of degenerate reality, the call to the tragic way of the cross must be heard again.

* * * * *

It is not possible to equate a life in Christ, lived by grace, with political socialism. On the other hand I feel strongly that many of the demands of conscience raised by socialists are born of the same longings that animated people in the time of John the Baptist...

The movement of conscience that is alive in socialism and communism is directed against the rule of mammon and bloodshed, against class hatred and greed. This movement comes from deep within; it is a movement of God. But this does not prevent me from recognizing, at the same time, the presence of powerful satanic and demonic forces at work in these same political movements.

What we need today - and what none of us has yet attained - is a simple discipleship of Jesus that responds to the longing of the present but goes beyond spiritually edifying experiences.

Letter to Friedrich Böhm, 1920

Against Bloodshed and Violence

“Against Bloodshed and Violence” was published in Arnold’s magazine, Das neue Werk, in April 1921. Although he had supported the war effort with nationalistic fervor prior to 1917, Arnold was by this time clearly convinced that reconciliation was not only to be preached, but lived. His premise is straightforward: God’s kingdom cannot remain a future ideal, but must become present reality. The character of the present-day church must therefore be in accordance with God’s future plan. It follows that the church cannot condone or support violence of any kind.

Again and again in the life of a nation, and in the class struggle for existence, pent-up tensions and conflicts erupt in violent outbursts. These outbursts reveal exploitation and oppression and the savage instincts of covetous passion. People respond in different ways to this violence: some try to uphold law and order by murderous means, while others feel called to fight for social justice with the oppressed. As Christians, however, we must look further ahead.

Christ witnessed to life, to the unfolding of love, to the unity of all members in one body. He revealed to us the heart of his father, who lets his sun shine on the wicked as well as the good. He commissioned us to serve life and to build it up, not to tear it down or

destroy it. Thus we believe in a future of love and constructive fellowship - in the peace of God's kingdom. And our faith in this kingdom is much more than any wishful longing for the future. Rather, it is a firm belief that God will give us his heart and spirit now, on this earth.

As the hidden, living seed of the future, the church has been entrusted with the spirit of this coming kingdom. Her present character must therefore show now the same peace and joy and justice that she will embody in the future. For this reason, we must speak up in protest against every instance of bloodshed and violence, no matter what its origin.

Our witness and will for peace, for love at any cost, even our own lives, has never been more necessary. Those who tell us that the questions of nonviolence and conscientious objection are no longer relevant are wrong. Just now, these questions are more relevant than ever. But answering them requires courage and perseverance in love.

Jesus knew he would never conquer the spirit of the world with violence, but only by love. This is why he overcame the temptation to seize power over the kingdoms of the earth, and why he speaks of those who are strong in love - the peacemakers - as those who will inherit the land and possess the earth. This attitude was

represented and proclaimed strongly by the first Christians, who felt that war and the military profession were irreconcilable with their calling. It is regrettable that serious-minded Christians today do not have the same clear witness.

We acknowledge the existence of evil and sin, but we know it will never triumph. We believe in God and the rebirth of humankind. And our faith is not faith in evolution, in the inevitable ascent to greater perfection, but faith in the spirit of Christ - faith in the rebirth of individuals and in the fellowship of the church. This faith sees war and revolution as necessary judgment on a depraved and degenerate world. Faith expects everything from God, and it does not shy away from the collision of spiritual forces. Rather, it longs for confrontation, because the end must come - and after it, a completely new world.

* * * * *

I really believe that much good is being said and done in the cause of peace and for the uniting of nations. But I don't think it is enough. If people feel urged to try to prevent or postpone another major European war, we can only rejoice. But what troubles us is whether they

will have much success in opposing the war spirit that exists right now:

When over a thousand of our German people have been killed by Hitler - without a trial - isn't that war?

When hundreds of thousands of people in concentration camps are robbed of their freedom and stripped of all dignity, isn't that war?

When hundreds of thousands are sent to Siberia and freeze to death while felling trees, isn't that war?

When in China and Russia millions of people starve to death while in Argentina and other countries millions of tons of wheat are stockpiled, isn't that war?

When thousands of women prostitute their bodies and ruin their lives for the sake of money, isn't that war?

When millions of babies are murdered by abortion each year, isn't that war?

When people are forced to work like slaves because they cannot otherwise feed their children, isn't that war?

When the wealthy live in villas surrounded by parks while other families don't even have a single room to themselves, isn't that war?

When some people build up enormous bank accounts while others earn scarcely enough for basic necessities, isn't that war?

When automobiles, driven at speeds agreeable to their owners, kill sixty thousand people a year in the United States, isn't that war?

Talk, August 1934

* * * * *

We do not represent the pacifism that believes it can prevent future war. This claim is not valid; there is war right up to the present day.

We do not advocate the pacifism that believes in the elimination of war through the restraining influence of certain superior nations.

We do not support the armed forces of the League of Nations, which are supposed to keep unruly nations in check.

We do not agree with a pacifism that ignores the root causes of war - property and capitalism - and tries to bring about peace in the midst of social injustice.

We do not agree with a pacifism that continues fighting while it drafts peace treaties.

We have no faith in the pacifism held by businessmen

who beat down their competitors, nor do we believe in the pacifism of people who cannot even live in peace with their own wives.

We reject any pacifism that brings benefits or advantages to certain nations or businesses.

Since there are so many kinds of pacifism we cannot believe in, we would rather not use the word pacifism at all. But we are friends of peace, and we want to help bring about peace. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers!” And if we really want peace, we must represent it in all areas of life. We cannot injure love in any way or for any reason. So we cannot kill anyone; we cannot harm anyone economically; we cannot take part in a system that establishes lower standards of living for manual workers than for academics.

Talk, August 1934

* * * * *

God is our future, even as he is our origin. He approaches us with a demand and a promise: Break new ground! Away with what is old and petrified! Become flesh and blood, stirred with life and feeling! Let the Spirit come over you as rain comes over the desert, cracked and fissured in its hardness. Let the Spirit who

is God himself enter into you, or you will remain dead bones!

But what good is religious exercise, what good is worship and song, if God's will is not done, if our hands are stained with blood? What good is belief by the unjust, or the confession to God by those who turn their backs on dying children? Change completely! Become different; become human! Believe God, and give your life to God.

This is the message of all the prophets, including John the Baptist: Change radically! Let everything be turned upside-down! The new order is coming. That which now rules the world will be abolished. Something utterly different will come to this world. The rulership of God is near!

Jesus did not believe in a god who brings unhappiness, death and demons, crime and injustice. On the contrary, he proclaims the God who eliminates all these things. He knows that evil prevails in this world. But he knows more: that it will be overcome, that everything will become new and different.

This victory over evil is the sole task of Jesus' life. The purpose of his mission is to overthrow Satan, the tyrant of the earth - to strip him of power; to occupy his land, to destroy his achievements and works. Jesus promises the most radical new order of all things,

including things political and social, cultural and agricultural, ethnographical and geographical. A new order for all things - this is the substance of his words.

His will is always one thing: that God's will become history on earth as it is in heaven - that God, who until now has been blasphemed, might at last be honored. He wants God's rulership and harmony, which already governs the circling of the stars and the laws of matter, to prevail amongst men. That heaven come to earth - that the earth itself become the kingdom of heaven - that is his goal.

All of Jesus' parables about the kingdom of heaven point to this goal. Think of the ruler who goes away on a journey: he first hands his realm over to his co-workers, entrusting to each certain duties and responsibilities. When he comes back, he calls them together and celebrates joyfully with those who have fulfilled their obligations. In the same way, God entrusts the earth to us until his return.

Lecture, Saxony, 1924

* * * * *

Arnold was revolutionary not only in principle, but in practice - and down to the smallest details. His colleagues were horrified when he discarded his business suit for the tunic and knee britches sported by young radicals, but they

were even more shocked when he and his wife Emmy decided to exchange their middle-class existence for a life of voluntary poverty. Emmy writes:

We had no financial basis of any kind, either for starting a new business or for buying the villa at Sannerz to use as a community house. But that made no difference. It was time to turn our backs on the past and start afresh in full trust. Well-meaning friends shook their heads: What rash irresponsibility - and five small children at that! Frau Michaelis, the wife of the former Reich-Chancellor, even offered to care for me and the children in the event that Eberhard would really take such an "unusual" step. But after talking with me, she reported to a mutual friend: "She is even more fanatical than he is! There is nothing we can do."

2

The New Justice

Arnold's life-long preoccupation with the Sermon on the Mount was as practical as it was profound. Yet his writings about these words of Jesus have nothing to do with interpretation or analysis. Instead, they point to simple obedience, and to a manner of living apart from which no can call himself Christian.

Not a New Law

How do we respond to the Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount is the first step on the way of discipleship, and as such we must consider it deeply. If we fully grasp the Sermon on the Mount and believe it, then

nothing can frighten us - neither our own self-recognition, nor financial threats, nor our own personal weaknesses.

And the Sermon on the Mount is not high-tension moralism, but the revelation of God's power in human life. If we truly surrender to God and allow him to enter our lives, then we will be able to live the new life. But if, like the Tolstoyans, we see the Sermon on the Mount as five new commandments, we will fall right into a trap. For Leo Tolstoy interprets these commandments of Jesus as five new laws: peacefulness with others, sexual purity and marital faithfulness, the refusal to swear oaths, nonresistance to evil, and love to one's enemies. But Jesus did not make new laws; rather, he sharpened the clarity and demands of the old. And the things he touched on are only examples that reveal the powerful effect of God's work - he could have used five hundred or five thousand.

His righteousness is better than anything scholars or theologians can offer. It is something absolutely different; it does not depend on moral intention. It can be fulfilled only through a new way of living: through the life from God that flares up like light, that sears and purifies like salt, that pulses like sap through a tree. It is life, life, life! And community has no purpose if it does not receive its life from the Sermon on the Mount.

Address, October 1935

* * * * *

The Sermon on the Mount reveals Jesus' heart and confronts us with his will. He knows that all are poor and empty, but he will bring happiness and wealth to those who - because they feel their poverty - are open to what he gives. His sermon is not a law, nor does it require any moral effort or exertion of energy. It requires only emptiness, a vacuum of utter spiritual poverty.

In Luke this is written without qualification: Happy are you poor! Blessed are you who hunger and thirst! Blessed are you who weep! Blessed are you who are persecuted! Here there is no hint of a specialized religious life. Rather, the citizens of the kingdom are marked by their poverty, and by the fact that they are despised and maligned - that they hunger and thirst and know suffering.

Luke goes on: Woe to you who are rich! Woe to you who are full! Woe to you who laugh! Woe to you who are praised by men! And this "Woe!" applies to all who hang on to their possessions, no matter how admirable or necessary. The prerequisite for the kingdom is poverty. This poverty is not only poverty of material things, but also poverty of spirit, and emptiness of religion and moral wisdom - a mourning for the world

and for ourselves, for collective and individual guilt, for material need and for the deepest need of the soul.

The persecution and contempt that must come to those who are poor in this sense will be a persecution for the sake of the new justice. This justice will be hated most of all by those who feel righteous in their wealth and moral rectitude, because it condemns to death their present life on earth.

The nature of this new justice is at the heart of Jesus' teaching. It is blissfulness in poverty. It is the mystery of the changed heart, that radical change proclaimed by John, the last prophet of the first Judaism. He foretold the new order of things envisioned by all the prophets before him, and he proclaimed God as joy and justice and fellowship for all people. Jesus himself was immersed in this future justice, which is God himself.

The entire Sermon on the Mount shows this new justice to be a gift of God. Thus it cannot coexist with the goodness and achievement of people. It appeared only once, in the Son of Man, in Jesus. But it is present today in the risen Lord, active in his spirit, working as the power of the creator, the God of resurrection. The Sermon shows us, then, the character of Jesus himself and therefore the character of his kingdom, which tolerates no awareness of human goodness or nobility, no standing on rights, and no strife between people.

Only those who recognize their dependence on God, and who have reverence before him, can understand this.

Becoming a new person in Christ has nothing to do with human effort. Jesus does not say that we should be salt or light. Rather, he knows that new birth comes from God. Thus he says we are salt and light. But unless salt is salty, it is fit only to be thrown out. And unless light burns and shines and warms, it is not light. Light, like salt, does its task by consuming itself. Love as selfless devotion is the essence of Jesus and his kingdom.

Only out of such love can any fellowship arise. To try to manufacture communal life is just as impossible as to produce a tree in a factory. The building up of community is always the work of God, and does not depend on human striving. Creation's law of growth and life stands in contrast to human works, just as the law of the spirit of life is contrasted with the law of sin and death in Paul's Letter to the Romans.

What we cannot accomplish, God can. His creative spirit governs the law of life, for he is a God of all that is living, not a God of death. The resurrection of Jesus is the ultimate revelation of this law. His words can be grasped only where he is proven powerfully to be the Son of God. Otherwise, it remains an impossibility, a utopia or fantasy, self-deception or madness.

The life that springs from the Spirit is like a seed: it must be buried in the soil to die, but then bursts forth bearing fruit. It is the mortal enemy of death and hatred, murder and human effort. Liberating love is life's only fulfillment. Only the love of God can lift us above our human sphere to affirm life and bestow its gifts on all that is living. And God sends his sun on all - on sinners and moralists, on the just and the unjust, on those who seek him and those who blaspheme him. His justice is far removed from that of the moralists and theologians, who emphasize boundaries and differences.

God's heart is mercy. His love goes out to all. He wants justice in external things as much as he wants to shower us with mercy. Thus Luke summarizes the attitude of the citizens of the kingdom with the simple words: Love! Be merciful! Hold on to nothing for yourselves. Do not judge or seek faults in others. Give to all and be generous to your enemies!

The way of reconciliation and nonresistance means giving up all rights. It means expending more time, more strength, and more life, even if this provokes nothing but enmity. For love to one's neighbor - which Jesus equates with love to God - is inseparably bound to unconditional love for one's enemy. The love of God turns to both with equal power. Thus opposition must

stimulate love to greater effort; hostility should only strengthen our urge for dedication.

Those who dare to live by this spirit will stand again and again before what is infinite and boundless. They will tremble as before a bottomless abyss, and yet at the same time their lungs will be filled with endless purity and strength - with the eternal breath of God. Their prayer will not be loud and conspicuous, but chaste and hidden. For the Father looks for life in the remote mountain, the barren steppe, and the closed room.

The Sermon on the Mount lies at the heart of John's proclamation: Change yourselves fundamentally, for the kingdom of God is near! Gather no riches for yourselves! Know only one treasure, the treasure in heaven. Do not set your heart on things, for a divided heart leads to darkness and judgment. You cannot serve both God and money.

Worrying about material things is no less godless than accumulating wealth, because God provides abundantly for those who trust in him. He cares for us in the same way that he cares for the birds and flowers, and liberates us from both worry and possession. Thus he gives us a simple rule of living: never burden yourself by looking far ahead. Live one day at a time. If you can do this, you will live like children, birds, and flowers, for whom each day is a lifetime. You may break down in

guilt and failure, but each day will bring new joy and hope. There will be shadow and nightfall, but sun and air and grace as well.

This is why Jesus tells us to pray and believe again and again. He promises that if we ask, we will receive. The door will be opened to those who knock. The gate is narrow, but it is there for all. And Luke says clearly what the object of this asking, believing, waiting, and daring is. It is the Spirit! And if we who are evil give our children good things, we can rely on God to give us what we need: the Holy Spirit.

Only this Spirit can bring about the material realization of God's new creation. It transforms wolves into lambs, and turns the predatory world of man into the kingdom of God's peace. And its fruits are plainly seen in deeds of love, for action is what marks the new life of the Sermon on the Mount.

Essay, 1922

* * * * *

At the time of Jesus, as today, people were waiting for a new world order. They longed for the kingdom of justice of which the prophets had spoken. Then Jesus came, and he disclosed to them the nature and practical consequences of this justice. He showed them a justice

completely different from the moral order of the pious and holy - a living, growing power that conformed to the sacred laws of life. He did not give them commands about conduct, but instead radiated the spirit of the future with his very character.

That character was unity. That is why it is fruitless to take any one command of Jesus out of its context and set it up as a law on its own. It is not possible to take part in God's kingdom without purity of heart, without vigorous work for peace; the change of heart must extend to all areas. It is foolishness to try to follow Christ in only one sphere of life.

The Beatitudes cannot be taken apart. They begin and end with the same promise of possessing the kingdom of heaven. Those who are blessed are characterized by poverty and need, hunger and thirst. And at the same time they possess wealth in love, energy for peace, and victory over all resistance. Their nature is single-heartedness. They are people of inner vision, and they are able to see what is essential. They bear the world's suffering. They know that they are beggars in the face of the Spirit and that they have no righteousness within themselves. But they look to righteousness, and they hunger and thirst for the Spirit.

This is the essence of true religious experience: richness in God and poverty in oneself; becoming one with God

and yet always longing for him; firmness of heart and weakness of soul; the justice of God's love and the suffering of injustice.

But wherever there is religious satiety and moral self-satisfaction, wherever political achievements or other good works create self-righteousness, where anyone feels rich or victorious, happiness in the fellowship of the kingdom has been lost. Those who believe in God's future keep their hearts fixed on the Spirit and his prophetic justice of love, yet they still feel the injury of injustice in themselves and all around them. They are comforted by the certainty that love shall conquer the earth, but they also know poverty of spirit in themselves and in all humankind.

So they are both poor and rich at the same time. They are people of faith who have nothing in themselves and yet possess everything in God. In spite of failing again and again, they try to reveal God's invisible nature through their deeds. Just as they themselves receive mercy, so they pour out mercy on all in need. They are on the side of poverty and suffering, and are ready to be persecuted for the sake of justice. They know that their opponents' slander will fall on them like hail, yet they rejoice; they overcome opposition with peace and conquer enmity through love.

The people of the Beatitudes are the people of love. They live from God's heart and feel at home in him. The spirit of life has set them free from the law of sin and death; nothing can separate them from the love of God in Jesus. And what is most remarkable and mysterious about them is that they perceive everywhere the seed of God. Where people break down under suffering, where hearts long for the Spirit, they hear his footsteps; where the revolutionary desire for social justice arises, where protest against war and bloodshed rings out, where people are persecuted because of their socialism or pacifism, and where purity of heart and compassion can be found - there they see the approach of God's kingdom and anticipate the bliss to come.

Essay, 1920-1921

Away From Compromise and Shadow

The following essay, written in 1925, is Arnold's response to leaders of the German Youth Movement, who had attacked his efforts for community as "self-delusional, foolish, and mad." Members at the Sannerz community had revoked all rights to private property, and held that the way of love, peace, and nonviolence could solve all problems of war and social injustice. They rejected reform as ineffective and held that a new society must be built from the ground up.

Their critics, however, maintained that while it might be possible to avoid holding public office or resorting to law, everyone was tied to the system of oppression and taxation because everyone had to use money, at the very least to buy food. They justified the taking of life "to save perhaps thousands of fellowmen," and defended war as "responsible sinning." Further, they argued that body and spirit were in opposition and could never be brought into harmony; that a life of nonviolence in the modern age was "absurd," and that man could never "leap over his own shadow." A certain Max Dressler even stated that "the demands of Jesus are not really demands in the actual sense of the word" and that "one cannot speak of discipleship without compromise."

Arnold's answer to these claims is based on the Sermon on the Mount and the First Letter of John.

We must wrestle with the question of compromise because it comes up everywhere and concerns serious-minded people again and again. Behind it the fundamental problem of life lies dormant: the question of evil and death. Evil and death are so oppressive that goodness and life are constantly threatened by them. But it is frightening to see an increasing apathy and compromise with darkness - an avoidance of the either/or of life and death.

There can be no compromise with evil! The word "compromise" has its origin in the language of law. It is

a mutual settlement between contending parties - the only solution when legal conflict cannot be resolved.

The question is whether or not one can replace this legal justice with a higher justice - the justice of Jesus' heart as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount. This means that when faced with the threat of a legal battle, we who want the way of life and love must give up everything and allow our opponents to take everything away. If we do this we will be met not by hard demands, but by opportunities for love and joy.

This is the news of the new life: that joy excludes murder; love hates no one; truth strikes no compromise with lying; the heart remains pure only by making no concessions. God makes no settlement with mammon. Joy in life and love for all tolerates no compromise with evil, no concession to loveless indifference or murderous injustice, because love touches all things and changes all relationships. This is the message of the kingdom, the character of Jesus' words. Here is his heart.

Every movement that stems from God points to this way. But whenever Christ's way is forsaken, these movements begin to die. And this process of dying reaches its final stage when there is no more wrestling with death, when the struggle for life is deserted and people surrender unresisting to the shadow of death - when materialism and mediocrity gain a foothold and

we avoid the struggle to which Jesus has called us. Such dying threatens every movement.

Today people try to live simultaneously on the basis of law and grace. A life of nonviolence is called absurd even though Jesus lived such a life. People oppose an uncompromising stand, calling it legalism and fanaticism. They affirm materialism without qualification, are infatuated with sin, and take pains to show that they can never rid themselves of it. And it seems to make little difference to them whether there is more compromise or less, which shows all the more how far they are from the Way.

Only the love experienced in the full forgiveness of sin can bring us healing! In this atmosphere the legalistic “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not” cease to exist. This cannot be emphasized strongly enough. Yet the experience of this love must lead to consequences in practical life. He who is forgiven much, loves much. And how can we love God, whom we do not see, if we do not love the brother or sister whom we do see?

There is only one way: the way of love that comes from forgiveness and has its essence in forgiveness. This way is the absolute discipleship of Jesus. It makes no compromises with our cold and loveless age. This does not mean that the person gripped by love never makes compromises; rather, the love that has gripped

him can make no compromises. If evil deeds are done, they come from depravity and weakness of character. But when love takes hold again, the highest goal reappears and the heart lives again - full and glowing. The words of Jesus bring back the power of perfect love.

The First Letter of John describes this uncompromising attitude: whoever claims to be without sin is a liar. We are told this so that we may not sin. But if we do sin, we have an advocate who expiates the sin of the whole world. Whoever abides in him does not sin. If any one sins, then in this sin he has not seen and known him. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of evil."

Those who defend sin show that they have gone astray and lost sight of Jesus. They neither see nor recognize him. There is a great deal of difference between doing evil, or turning our backs on it and forgetting it. For Paul it was essential to leave everything behind and to race single-mindedly toward the goal. Certainly it was always clear to him - and he testified to this strongly - that he was not without guilt. But for him, the forgiveness of Christ meant liberation from wrong and evil. Paul was a fighter in full armor who fought against all evil and even against death itself.

It is significant that uncompromising love has nothing to do with softness or indecision in the face of battle. On

the contrary, those who are full of life and gripped by love must be fighters to the point of death. Their battle must be waged most sharply in themselves, against everything that is injurious to life, hostile to fellowship, and to God. Yet they can never be hard toward others, though it may be felt as hardness when they struggle with glowing and passionate love against the evil in others, and in public affairs. And their fight cannot remain a private matter; it must become a public striving against all evil in all human and social conditions.

Those who work for love in this way will be wrongly seen as moralistic or even legalistic. But their attitude toward people and institutions has been defined by the goal of God's kingdom. Their ethics will be determined by the character of the Son of Man and his followers, by the truth of love, and by the will of God's heart. They must live a life of love in the attitude of the future world and in the perfection of God, because there is no other life.

This brings us to an age-old topic: perfection. Certainly we are not sinless. But today people speak about the necessity of evil and humanity's common bondage in guilt, and this leads to consent to involvement in guilt. Ironically, people dismiss the world peace to which the prophets witness. They reject the elimination of government proclaimed in John's Revelation, and the

transformation of the present social order through church community. They discount community as the expression of true love.

The fact that they dismiss all these things shows that they no longer take a stand against evil. They are avoiding the decisive choice that Jesus represents: God or mammon. They have turned away from the clarity of Jesus, who challenged us to say yes or no and nothing in between. They have accepted a paradoxical situation in relation to God; all they can say in their vanity is “yes and no” or “no and yes” simultaneously. We must fight against this!

They challenge us: Surely you don’t want to wage a general campaign against all evil? And we answer, Yes, this is exactly what it is all about. That is why Jesus came into the world; he called us and sent us out to fight against all evil in all things. He came to destroy the works of the devil. God is light and in him there is no darkness!

* * * * *

Arnold discerned the spirits of good and evil clearly, and though he was compassionate towards those who struggled with sin, he would not compromise when it came to fighting those spirits that opposed life and community. Once, at a retreat center in London, he got into a heated

argument with a Swiss theologian. The proprietor, Doris Lester, begged Arnold to calm down. Gandhi had been there the week before, she said, and he had been gentle and quiet - a model guest; couldn't he be the same? But Arnold was not interested in what people thought of him. If he was to call himself a servant of God, he must protest evil, even if by shouting.

God's Kingdom - Future and Present

"This is the Sermon on the Mount in the full force of its impact, in its undiminished relevance, in unconditional absoluteness. Here there is no compromise. Whoever wants to belong to the kingdom must give himself wholly and go through with it to the last!" So writes Erwin Wissman in a 1919 issue of the German periodical Die Furche praising a recent lecture by Arnold at a youth conference in Marburg.

In fact, Arnold cared little for glowing literary reviews, but Wissman is right about "unconditional" and "absolute": this address led to the founding of Sannerz, Arnold's community, only a year later. To Arnold, words without deeds were more than foolish; they were dishonest. Scripture was not to be analyzed or interpreted, but to be lived and obeyed. This was hard - even inconceivable - if it depended on human strength or moral will. But it did not; it depended only on new life from the Spirit.

The phrase “future state” is used frequently and underlines Arnold’s belief that the kingdom of God is a government, a state in which God rules over human beings.

John the Baptist proclaimed a future state of social justice - God’s kingdom - which would come to the earth. He insisted on complete transformation because he believed that God’s kingdom was near.

Although crowds of people flocked to him to find forgiveness and renewal, John knew that someone else had to bring the transforming, sanctifying Spirit, without which God’s revolution could not take root. This person was the longed-for Messiah, Jesus, whose works followed John’s prophetic proclamations. Jesus, too, was directed by the imminence of God’s kingdom. Everything he said pointed to the revolutionizing of the earthly life by God.

Jesus baptized in the spirit. If we allow his words to work in us, we will be stirred by a refreshing wind that penetrates our very bodies. About God’s kingdom he said, “What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And, “Anyone who is not born of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God.” Thus he declared that without new birth the future kingdom would be impossible. In this, as in everything else, he lived in the truth that society could be transformed

only through a renewal of the spiritual life.

Jesus told us more clearly than any of the prophets what the characteristics of the Spirit are, without which we can gain neither inner renewal nor the future state on earth. In the Sermon on the Mount, he says that the poor, the suffering, the merciful, and the loving are blessed and will inherit the kingdom of heaven. He commands us: Do not lay up treasures on earth for yourself. Turn the other cheek and give away your coat as well as your jacket. Show love to neighbor and enemy alike, help without restraint, and give blessing unconditionally.

How few consider what Jesus really means - what moral demands his words imply! The Sermon on the Mount is known by most Christians, but for many it remains completely closed. Yet in it, Jesus characterizes the inner life that alone can bring about true social justice. It holds the secrets to God's kingdom, and as such can only be revealed in God himself. Only in communion with God we can hope for and take hold of the future kingdom.

It is incredibly dishonest to pray daily that this kingdom should come - that God's will be done on earth as in heaven - and at the same time to deny that Jesus wanted this kingdom to be put into practice on earth now. Whoever asks for the rulership of God must be

wholeheartedly resolved to carry out his commands. Those who deem the Sermon on the Mount impractical should remember its concluding words: “Not all who say ‘Lord’ shall reach the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my Father in heaven.”

God’s kingdom is the kingdom of love. This love makes no exceptions, because it is free and cannot be held back. We are surrounded by the relative, the imperfect, the conditional - all that accommodates to circumstance. But whoever lives like Jesus lives in the absolute, the unconditional, and the perfect. He possesses God and his kingdom in the present. He is free of the influences of his surroundings. What he is, and what he possesses, has a transforming effect on his environment.

Expecting God’s future means believing in God’s absolute will for the present. The same intensity of inner experience belongs to both; the two are interdependent. And the kingdom of God cannot be of the world as it is today. Yet it is for the world, and in the end must transform it completely. Christ’s people are sent out to work among humanity, to have an effect in the world, just as Jesus himself did. They must represent the future kingdom, and their task and their actions cannot be different from Christ’s: to deliver both soul and body, and to heal all suffering and torment.

Like Jesus, they must overcome the temptation to produce bread by evil means or win control in the realm of politics. All this would be contrary to God's spirit. They have been sent like defenseless sheep among ravenous wolves, and reject all ways of aggression. In obedience to the word of their Lord they have sheathed their swords, for love and the Spirit are their only weapons. They know that this spirit of Jesus is the mightiest power, which no other power can withstand. He who sent them does not want to destroy life but to save it, and, as children of the spirit, they cannot forget to which spirit they belong. So, too, they cannot send destructive fire on people and cities. The only fire Jesus kindled is the fire of love. There was nothing he wanted more than that this warming light and fire spread over the whole earth.

Jesus knew the resistance in the spiritual realm that had to be overcome before victory could be won. The life of God can be won only by complete firmness of will. The absolute can be won only by totality. This is why the old, degenerate life must be abhorred. One must hate father and mother, wife and child - indeed one's own life wherever it disturbs and destroys the new life.

This is why Jesus advised the rich young man to sell his possessions, follow him, and live for the poor; and it is why he himself did not have anywhere to sleep. Jesus

said to his friends, "Sell what you have. Whoever does not renounce all he has cannot be my disciple."

To see this only as a negation of earthly things is to misjudge what is real and essential. Jesus contrasted the richness of gathering treasures to the richness of life in God. Bringing in the richest harvest or erecting the biggest building cannot benefit us if we lose eternal life. Ownership or abundance of earthly goods can never give life. To find true happiness on earth we must be filled with God's love and gather treasure in heaven.

Love, which makes life fully alive, must generate love. It is life's only wealth. The man who overcomes selfishness gains life. Jesus says that the love of God is the greatest love in a person's life, and that we love God whenever we love others as much as we love ourselves.

Jesus had the greatest compassion for the sick and for sinners. Those who have his spirit will be drawn to the victims of prejudice, and to those who suffer either through their own guilt or that of others. They will never feel like benefactors, but will know the fulfillment of their deepest calling in service to all people.

He says that such people will remain unconscious of the Christ-like character of their lives. They will live for the hungry and the thirsty, the homeless and the naked, the sick and the imprisoned, and yet they will not know what they have done until they are told, "What

you have done to the least of these, you have done to me.”

Their lives will be so deeply immersed in the spirit of community that none among them will strive for a high position. They will seek the simplest way of serving, and help as many as they can. They will love their enemies especially, and overcome resistance by genuine affection, by acts of practical service, and by honest intercession.

A life of this nature is possible only if we can become young again and again - if we can become spontaneous and trusting, unconstrained and genuine, loving all people the way children do. Only through childlike trust can we become one with God. “Those who do not receive the kingdom of God like children cannot enter.” The kingdom of God belongs to children!

And the kingdom of God rushes in wherever the spirit of childlike love is alive. It is like a man buried alive in an earthquake: at first he flails in the foul, stale darkness, but when he suddenly breaks through the rubble, fresh air rushes in. He is once again united with the world for which he longs, even if he cannot climb out into it. In the same way, we who are imprisoned in the present moment will be overwhelmed by the powers of eternity as soon as we dare to open ourselves to the eternal and absolute, the divine and perfect.

Those who turn their thoughts away from the physical world and set all of their hopes on life after death are counterfeiters of truth. The new redemption is intended for us. The new will is to be realized here on earth!

Many people over the centuries - most decisively, Jesus - have shown this to be true. But he was murdered, and this was bound to happen. He was killed by the military; by the most organized legal system in history; by the most religious people that ever lived; by the leaders of the church and the voice of the people. And this was no accident. He was murdered because people, bound by their possessions, could not tolerate his witness for truth.

Still today we cannot bear his truth, and so we twist it every way possible. We no longer dare to accept the clarity of his words about loving our enemies, even though everything he taught is contained in his simple words, "What you wish for yourself, do to others."

I am always astonished at those pious people who are concerned for the souls of others and yet have no eye for the need of their starving neighbors. They know quite well what those needs are, and yet they leave them unmet. How can such people confess Christ? We go the way of Jesus only when we leave everything in order to go with him. That means standing up for all men, first of

all for the oppressed. This is how he himself lived, and this is how many people have conducted their lives in the course of the centuries.

The nineteenth century distorted the image of Jesus in an amazing way. We are now in a crisis; our actions no longer fit our words. Those who call themselves atheists bear witness to the future of love and to solidarity with the deprived and dispossessed, while those who call themselves Christians are for the most part the possessors and preservers of the status quo. This was not always the case. In earlier centuries not only individuals such as Francis of Assisi but throngs of others hastened to help each other in mutual fellowship.

In this materialistic age we see that the commandment Jesus gave us in his Sermon on the Mount, "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his justice, and everything else shall be yours as well," has not gripped Christendom. Therefore the coming revolution will have to be the overturning and re-evaluation of all values, the revolution of all revolutions.

This revolution must be such that it brings with it the brotherhood of mankind. And brotherliness can arise only from the spirit of brotherhood; it will not come unless the starting point and goal and means of fighting are led and determined by the spirit of brotherhood. Therefore I confess to the most decisive and deepest revolution of

all: the enormous world catastrophe of all time, the overturning of all things and all relationships, which Jesus called the kingdom of God.

Jesus saw and felt that this coming of the living God to men was the only way to true humanity. But this way demands that we enter through the narrow gate. It means the loss of all privilege and property. It means that we perish, that we suffer what amounts in the eyes of others to a personal downfall so severe that it seems we are committing a sort of social suicide. And in a certain sense we are: "Those who love their life will lose it; but those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

We have to lose life in order to find it. This means that our corrupted lives are overcome; that we are freed from the love of possessions, from covetous desire. It is a dying, but it is a dying which allows us to rise to a new life. And this life is not an otherworldly, heavenly life, but a physical life on the earth. It is the life to which the early Christians testified: the life in which our bodies become temples of the Holy Spirit; the life that leads to community of work and goods.

We are infinitely far away from this goal. But we have to trust in the spirit of life; in the spirit of love and unity, solidarity and justice. In this trust we shall attain not mere equality, but brotherliness and true love.

3

Becoming Human

Nature needs to be redeemed. This does not mean we should be redeemed from nature, in the sense of becoming detached from nature, but that nature itself must be redeemed - so that matter, the stuff of the first creation, may be freed from the spirit of murder and all other evils. Jesus Christ, the true man, the Son of Man, embodied this redemption in human life.

Unlike those who follow eastern religions, we who call ourselves Christians need not shed our human nature in order to advance into higher and holier spheres. To the contrary: God became man in Jesus, and this incarnation brings full redemption to us. So we, too, desire nothing else but to become truly human...

Buddha calls: Leave this world and go to the other! And Jesus says: The kingdom of God will come to this world! Buddha speaks of movement from this world to the other world; Jesus speaks of movement from the other world into this one. Buddha wants us to give up being human, but in Jesus, the opposite happens: God becomes man.

Just by this - by God becoming man - we who were inhuman now become truly human. And just this is what Jesus commanded: that his will be done on the earth as it is in heaven; that his will, which is reality in heaven, becomes reality on the earth.

May thy kingdom come! May it come here! May it come to us!

Buddha was not able to say anything like this. Rather, he could only say: Lift me up, out of this earth! Take me away from this earth, so that I might enter your kingdom!

Address, August 1934

The Better Righteousness

Like his contemporary Herman Hesse, who wrote, "We are not yet men; we are still on our way to humanity," Arnold felt that even twentieth-century man - with all his cultural and technological advancement - was not yet truly human. If man was not yet perfect, however, Jesus

was - and he exhorted his disciples to be as perfect as his Father. In this essay from 1919, Arnold challenges us to the same perfection. He reminds us, however, that it must be born of the Spirit, and can have nothing to do with the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus brings us a new ethic in the Sermon on the Mount. Whereas the morality of the scribes and Pharisees is an outward righteousness - the product of legalism and the coercion of society, church, and state - the new righteousness shows its nature as inner freedom. Independent of outward circumstances, it rejects the impositions of mammon. Instead, it builds upon God and on fellowship with God.

Those who belong to God's kingdom differ so sharply in character from everyone else that they can be compared only to the Father in heaven: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." God is the wellspring of life and love. We become his children and gain his character when we are reborn in his spirit. But the only way to attain this new life is through liberation from the old.

Jesus himself is the new man, the second Adam - the life-giving spirit who leads us from the deadness of the old nature into the warm, powerful life of the new humanity. In fellowship with him we become the salt which overcomes the decay of death. In him we are the light, spreading life-giving warmth and clarity of

vision. In him we gain the nature of God himself, the new nature of spirit and love.

This new life in God is a paradox. We must be decisive and single-minded, but at the same time remain humble in the awareness of our utter smallness. God alone can free us from vanity and arrogance, from the piety and moralism of our own strength. Face to face with him we will recognize our neediness, and become beggars before him. We will thirst for the righteousness of God.

The righteousness of the moralist is pressured and compulsive, but the righteousness of Jesus is spontaneous. His deeds are driven by enthusiasm for life and by an inner urge for action. And his parable of the good tree with its good fruit - and of the rotten tree with its bad fruit - shows us how to distinguish what is new from what is old. Only those deeds that spring spontaneously from within can be regarded as good. We live the better righteousness only when we bring forth good fruit.

God cannot lie; therefore the new justice is truth that seeks expression in everything. The moralism of the world, the assertion of force and rights, is now replaced by love that stops at nothing - not even in the face of the enemy. This love establishes life and justice. It demonstrates fidelity and purity of thought, and is patient and merciful, full of compassion to the whole suffering world.

God's will is peace and justice. Only those who live by it can claim to be part of his new kingdom. In the same way, Jesus demands deeds and work. We deceive ourselves if we think otherwise. Those who only hear his words are compared to the foolish man whose house, built on sand, collapsed. But those who hear him and act are like the man who builds on rock.

The Conscience

There is a modern tendency to call even the healthiest reactions of the conscience a sign of sickness that should be ignored. But that must be repudiated most decisively. The conscience must never be silenced. Instead, it must be led to health by being directed toward the kingdom of God. Far from being despised, it must gain positive recognition through being filled with new clarity and new content. This freeing and fulfillment will lead to lively activity in all areas of life, including areas of public responsibility and vocational activity. In these areas especially, the conscience that is bound to Christ and his kingdom can lead us on completely new ways.

But we live in confusing times, and what was once considered abnormal is now felt to be not only normal

but even necessary. The present-day confusion of conscience with regard to sex is typical. In the circles influenced by Sigmund Freud, people attempt to draw all kinds of sexual perversions out of the slumbering subconscious. They actually regret that these perversions have been repressed into the subconscious by the conscience. And what is even worse is the way in which spiritual leaders explain away this ever-increasing confusion, with the result that no one even feels uneasy.

Certainly the word “repression” is enough to deprecate the whole activity of the conscience and throw suspicion on it. In fact, this dangerous word does not apply to a healthy conscience. Yet it is not without significance. There would indeed be a fatal repression, a morbid suppression of all vital impulses, if the conscience were not able to spur the powers of body and soul to positive and creative tasks.

There is a reason why the whole idea of repression is so misunderstood in our sick age: the concept of the family, as it is almost universally accepted today, no longer corresponds to God’s creative will. Both young people and their parents lack that sense of inner responsibility that puts the whole of life, including all interpersonal relationships, into God’s hands.

Most people today suffer no pangs of conscience when the soul’s deepest need for faithfulness is destroyed.

They are affected just as little when the smallest souls that want to be called into life are prevented or annihilated. Little souls wait in vain to be called out of eternity. Living human souls wait in vain to be called by constancy and faithfulness. And there seem to be fewer and fewer people in whom the conscience protests clearly and sharply against contempt for the creative spirit, against the profaning of faithfulness and constancy.

The inner protest of the conscience calls us to responsibility and faithfulness in our love-lives. Anyone who calls this “repression” casts suspicion on creation itself. The activity of the conscience provides us with our only safeguard against the fall that threatens us, a fall that would make us lower than the animals. The conscience is not repressed but healthy when a person suppresses uncreative and life-thwarting urges toward his own body or the body of his companion. We should be thankful whenever “repression” wipes out degenerate or murderous desires.

Enlightened persons do not allow the sultry urges of the subconscious mind to influence the thoughts of their soul. They condemn sinful urges as irresponsible. And they do not regard their sense of responsibility as morbid. Rather, they feel that it is a sign of a healthy mind. A conscience working like this is on its way to recovery; it knows that life’s energies are intended for great and noble tasks,

tasks that cannot be hindered or desecrated.

As the moral function of the human spirit, the conscience affirms everything prompted and inspired by the Spirit of God. It takes a prophet's place in the human heart: it becomes the mouth of God and must therefore repeat and pass on whatever God has to say. The conscience that is on the way to recovery calls out, "God says it; God wills it; therefore it will come to pass."

The conscience represents the uniting of the human with the divine spirit in the liveliest way. God's spirit wants to unite with the human spirit to witness to the truth together. Our conscience will be clear and healthy to the same degree that we have accepted the spirit of Jesus Christ. Keeping a good conscience depends entirely on keeping the holy faith.

Faith and a good conscience are so closely bound together that rejection of the one means shipwreck to the other. For this reason, baptism of faith testifies to the bond of a good conscience with God. The conscience is made good by faith. Without faith, it goes astray. It becomes a bad conscience. Therefore the apostles of Jesus Christ say about those who do not have faith that they are tainted in mind and conscience alike. This is inevitable because without faith the conscience has no anchor. And the opposite is just as true: if we ignore the compass of the Christ-directed conscience, the ship of

faith will be dashed without warning on the next reef.

If we want to fight the good fight to the end, it is just as important to protect our faith as it is to protect our conscience. Faith in the freely given love of Jesus Christ needs to be treasured. A good conscience needs to be protected with the utmost watchfulness. True faith demands a tender and delicate conscience as a fruit of the spirit. Faith gives birth to a victorious decisiveness against all evil. Faith is served by a sound conscience. Faith demands deeds of love. It is, in fact, love of God, love of Christ, and love of the Holy Spirit. When we take pains to keep our conscience free of offense at all times, then we are given growth and activity in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, then our inner life becomes anchored in God and in all the powers of his spirit. Only love is without offense.

Yet we should not make the mistake of thinking that when our conscience steadily gains health and purity in love, we become sinless! Sinfulness remains characteristic of our nature. But the grace of the sacrificed life of Jesus - the grace of his blood - continually purifies our conscience through the Holy Spirit. Again and again, grace purifies it from all dead works and all offensive actions, from everything that violates the justice and love that go hand in hand with faith. The spirit of Jesus Christ leads believers to a life that steadily increases in

clarity. And yet the believer continues to be bound to all others by a common guilt.

Nevertheless, this guilt has been wiped out. People have the freedom to do good and to avoid evil and to fight it. Step by step, there is an advance toward the kingdom of God. In the life of Jesus, God gave us the gift that takes one burden after another from our conscience. It makes us free, without making us sinless. We do not become gods, but we allow the kingdom of God to come to us.

We can accept God's will in our life only when we are freed from the curse of a bad conscience. We can be one with God's holiness only when our hearts are unburdened, sprinkled, and consecrated. The heart is ready to come before God only after it has been touched by the sacrificed life of Christ in the closest and most intimate way, after it has been met by Christ himself and united with him as he was and is and will be.

Jesus is the way to God. There is no other God than the one who is the God and father of Jesus. Wherever we seek him, we will find him in Jesus. Unless we are freed in Jesus from all our burdens, we try in vain to draw near to the Father. We have no access to God without forgiveness of sin. And Jesus forgives us by sacrificing his life - by sacrificing his body, his soul, and his blood.

Through Jesus, Satan, the accuser of our brothers, is

silenced. The conscience also is no longer allowed to accuse. Even the most murderous accusations that human blood can raise are stilled. If he, the Son of Man, is for us, no one can condemn us. From now on, no accusation can prevent us from approaching God.

The conscience that used to be our enemy becomes in Christ our friend. Before it was in Christ, it had to condemn our life; now it affirms the new life given in Christ. Freed from all impurity through community with Christ, it accepts the assurance and certainty given in Jesus Christ. So the conscience becomes a representative of God. It becomes the voice of the one who is sent by God into the inner land of our soul.

And where the Spirit of God proclaims forgiveness and peace, the conscience will be roused to action. No area of life will escape, for the conscience wages its campaign against all evil. It will advance to the attack so that where there is no peace, peace will be made; where everything is in chains, freedom will dawn. Where injustice rules, justice will take its place; where love has grown cold, joy will break through; where people live for themselves, community will come into being.

Innerland

To fall away from faith, to deny Christ and his love, is the most terrible thing that can happen to us. We are all weak and can fall into sin unless we are protected by the goodness of God. But our love and our confession to Christ should stand unshaken as the deepest thing in our hearts.

Christ is the ultimate voice in our hearts. We can never deny this. If we look into the depths of our hearts, we will find him. We may forget everything else, but not our love to him, our confession to him, our longing for him and our dedication to him. Christ alone can save us. He is perfect, forgiving love. Everything depends on this one thing: do you believe in him? Do you love him?

What good is lamenting our sin? Only one thing matters - that we believe in Christ and that we love and trust him. If we now feel how the whole unhappy world is going to pieces and what an illusion such words as love, peace, and justice are, then we know there is only one true Man, who called himself the Son of Man, the Child of Man. For us, only Christ remains.

I have nothing else to hold on to in life or death; nothing else to believe in for my neighbors, for the people close to my heart; nothing else to trust in for our community; nothing else to hold on to in a world going to pieces. I must confess: I have nothing but Christ alone!

The Holy Spirit is grieved whenever human worthiness - or unworthiness - is put in the forefront. Therefore we ought to look not to man, but to Christ. This is especially true for the one trapped in a pit, the one sunk deeply in the mire. All he can do is wait patiently for the Lord. He must wait until he sees the hand stretching down to him, the hand that will pull him to safety and firm ground. That is the right attitude of faith: to wait for God with absolute certainty and with innermost clarity. And such a man, once pulled out of his pit, will not long to return there. No, he will have only one wish: to stay with Christ and share in his love. Christ's love pierces even into the deepest gloom.

That is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is why he died on the cross; why he took on the agony of God-forsakenness. And he did this all out of love. That is the Gospel. That is why he arose from the dead: so that he might reign over the living and the dead; so that now we may no longer live for ourselves but for him. This is forgiveness of sin: being sure that his love is greater than all else. However invincible the powers of sin seem to be, however dark the forces of sickness appear, greater than all is the power of love, the forgiving, restoring love that was revealed in Jesus Christ. Therefore let us love him, for he loved us first. Let us believe him, love him, follow him!

4

Unless You Become a Child

Arnold was perhaps unique in the attention he paid to the words of Jesus about children and about becoming childlike. For this reason, he often bemoaned his theological bent, which he saw not only as a gift but also as a curse. He was drawn to children and those people whom others looked down on as simple-minded. And he urged his friends, theologians and philosophers alike, to bow down before God and become children.

Ernst, we are fellow sufferers. We both have a theological vein. This is a gift from God, but it is at the same time a great danger that makes it very hard to live completely from what is genuine, from the depths of one's being, from the direct source of being.

Years ago I wished that I had grown up as an industrial

worker. But that was a foolish wish. We cannot change who we are. And yet we must become free from theological introspection; we must be won for the holy cause by a glowing, inner fire. You must become free first from your pronounced tendency to theologize, and second from your own markedly cramped will. Accept your fate: you are a theologian. But now you must become a child!

Talk, March 1933

* * * * *

The kingdom of God belongs to children. For this reason we can be led to the divine truth only if we have the childlike spirit. Certainly that does not mean that we should not be real men and women; the childlike spirit is not childish but rather unites itself with real manhood and real womanhood. It is the spirit of confident trust, of humility and endurance - the spirit that rejoices and loses itself in the object of its love and is released from self-contemplation. It gives itself completely, unaware of strain and sacrifice, and spends itself as though absorbed in play. It is the spirit of courage, for the true child - like the true man or woman - is never afraid or

fearful. It is the answer to all our needs, for the childlike spirit comes from the Holy Spirit. And we must believe that this Spirit really exists and that we can receive it.

Talk, August 1933

* * * * *

Children are open, like open books. They stand in front of us with wide-open eyes; they let us look freely into their little souls. As long as we let them be children, they will tell us right away what they feel: what they like and what they do not like. Genuine children never keep quiet in front of a person's face and then talk about him behind his back. Such cowardly deception is simply not found in children. Children are completely open. They always reveal whatever is in their hearts. And this is how a childlike soul acts in the church of believers. If they see something that should not be, they speak their mind - directly and at once. They are completely honest and straightforward.

The eighteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel contains deep words of Jesus about the childlike spirit. To be a disciple should mean to be a learner, to be a child. But the disciples were often unchildlike. They wanted to learn from Jesus, but they were still not of a childlike spirit. They came and asked, "Who is the greatest

among us? Who will play the main part; who will play the first violin? Who will be the greatest in the kingdom of God?" That was when Jesus called a little child before them and said, "Unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter into the kingdom of heaven."

If we are like children, we will not think of asking who will be the greatest in the kingdom of God. If we demand to be the greatest and first, we will end up being smaller than the smallest. Those bent on having the right of disposal, on speaking the final word in the church, will not enter the kingdom of God...

Jesus said, "Whosoever receives a child, receives me." When the church receives a tiny child, she receives Jesus, truly Jesus himself. And the word "child" includes all those who have childlike hearts: those who are chaste, who have pure hearts, who do not want to be great, who are unable to show any great accomplishments. Whoever receives such people receives Jesus. Whoever has respect for such a person has respect for Jesus.

The only spirit Jesus acknowledges is the childlike spirit. Thus one of the sternest things Jesus ever said becomes clear: "If anyone corrupts one of these little children, so that he can no longer be a child, it would be better for him to be drowned with a millstone around his neck." Jesus says it would be better for him not to

live: “Woe to the man who is the cause of this corruption! If your hand or foot causes you to sin, chop it off and throw it away. If your eye entices you to evil, pluck it out and throw it away.” And he warns us not to hold little children in contempt: “Their angels always have access to my Father.”

Remarkable words! How infinitely deep was the insight that set these words, about cutting off the hand or foot and tearing out the eye, next to the words about children. It is better for the church to have the eye that oversees everything torn out, or the hand that guides cut off, than for a child to lose his childlike spirit. It is better to die than to corrupt a child, to take away his childlike spirit.

Anything that puts an end to childhood is corruption. Anything that destroys a child’s true nature is corruption. We despise children not only when we mislead them to sin, but when we in any way deprive them of their childlikeness. Therefore Jesus calls us to hold children in highest esteem, to love the childlike spirit, to long for nothing else than to become like children.

Talk, October 1935

5

Love Divine and Love Human

In this essay from 1921, Arnold maintains that sexual love represents only a small part of the overpowering love of God. As such, Eros is not inherently suspect, but ought to be celebrated - as long as it remains subordinated to Agape. This bold assertion is consistent with Arnold's view that nature itself should be redeemed for God - and that the idea of being redeemed "from" our earthly nature is simply not Christian.

In his "Christmas Carol", Dickens portrays a rich old merchant in whom all but the last spark of love has died. His life has been ruined because he has given himself over completely to earning money. Nothing but coldness comes

from him; he is a man without a heart. This is so tangible that no child or beggar on the street dares ask him for the time of day or approach him for help.

In deathly loneliness he lives a purely commercial existence, devoid of human relationships. He has sacrificed even the love of his youth to the idol of money. Any pure hope he might once have had has been consumed in his quest for recognition and success; every noble feeling has been extinguished in his craving for financial gain. A man of established fortune, he is a soulless being. His life is so completely turned away from the community of men that his death is merely the confirmation of a long-established condition. Only if the spirit of his youth once more awakens will his lonely coldness and emptiness give way to God's warmth.

No one can live without love. Those without love are aging and dying; in truth, they are already dead. Where love sickens and degenerates, the innermost life is poisoned. Those who allow love's ardent urge and longing to go unused suffer the loss of their most precious possession.

Deep down, all of us worry about love. Every person feels that love is his destiny. Yet there are many who, in anxious moments, fear the love-life; to these people, love appears as a fire so hot it must be avoided. Others, no more fireproof, come too close to the blazing fire and

are burned. They allow themselves to be destroyed in a smoldering fire. Their outward persons deteriorate because they let their inner beings go to ruin.

For most people, love is a labyrinth in which every step seems a blunder. They have not discovered the secret of how to guide the living stream into the right channel. They feel that all love must end in God, just as all rivers flow into the ocean. They realize that much water trickles away or evaporates instead of finding its destination. They want nothing but the fulfillment of their own being and God's being, and yet they lack the vision to separate the pure, original force of love from its weakened forms.

Our language has only one word for the many different degrees of love - including all its sick and deviant forms. This simplicity of expression hides the mystery of love, and does not distinguish the relationships of body and soul that are healthy from those that are sick. The Greeks, on the other hand, differentiated between Eros, which includes but is not limited to possessive desire; and Agape, which is divine love - God's all-embracing love that gives itself to all.

People frequently ask how these spheres of love are related. Some are inclined to deny any essential difference between possessive love and personal affection, while others try to separate "holy" love from any contact with

Eros. Still others insist that since there can be no radiance of love without erotic energies, divine love does not exist at all.

Only those who have distanced themselves from God can judge in this way. Those who have been overwhelmed by God know that all forms of love, no matter how impure or distorted, are simply reflections of his unending and outpouring love. They are sure that God's holy love alone is what is essential in the love-life, and they know that the only important question regarding love is whether it remains in touch with this center of life, or whether it strays from it.

Scientists have pointed out that the areas in the brain responsible for religious experience and for the experience of love are adjacent. Herein lies a deep symbolism that points to the ultimate truth: "God is love; he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." Even the most degenerate and besmirched feelings of love have something from God hidden in them! Sadly, such feelings consume what is of God within them, to the extent that a person drowning in the flesh no longer has any eye for God at all.

Those who squander the energies of their love in the intoxication of the senses deprive the neighboring centers of the brain of their vital power. They exhaust and ruin their feeling for the life of God. They become dull to the

noblest impulses that come from the heart of God. Their vision is clouded, and they grope in the dark. But God sees with pure eyes. God floods us with Agape, the divine love that is devoid of lust or possessiveness.

Most people equate Eros with lust, which in its worst form continually exchanges one possession for another. But the erotic life can be ruled by Agape. How often this actually happens is another question.

In this visible world of time and space, we are unable to relate to one another without experiencing the attractions and repulsions of soul and body. This is the sphere of emotionally stimulated love, manifested in the holding of hands, the meeting of eyes, the striding together arm in arm. This is fellowship in word and song, in hiking and sport; it is friendship in joy and sorrow, in faith and in hope; this is the community of humankind without which we could not live.

We rejoice about these powers of Eros that cannot be mistaken for sultry eroticism. For Eros does not represent mere lust, but communal experiences of the soul that belong to a relatively pure atmosphere. Yet the purest air of love is still the breath of the Spirit that goes out from Jesus; Socrates and Plato could only sense this.

The essence and basis of all life and community is Agape, the love that comes from God and leads to God. Agape is the love that never ends and knows no bounds.

It is the revelation of the transcendent in the immanent - the revelation of the spiritual in the material, the cosmic in the earthly.

The love between two people or between the members of a community can be fulfilled only in God's inexhaustible and everlasting eternity. Only in God can love flow freely through our lives; only in him can we radiate a love free from the possessive desire of Eros. Only in him can the intoxication of the senses be replaced by the ecstasy of the divine Spirit, which is so often mistaken for asceticism. Eros has submitted to the rulership of Agape. The all-embracing Spirit has replaced the isolated, possessive will.

Nietzsche himself recognized that all love leads to the eternal and the endless: "All desire seeks eternity - deep, profound eternity!" Goethe, too, recognized the power of Eros: Faust at first exults in the physical, but ultimately finds fulfillment in building and preserving the community of humankind.

Our love-life determines our fate in the most serious sense of the word. Either Eros hurls us down into the hellish abyss of demonic self-destruction, or it lifts us up to the pure heights of God. This depends on the inner nature of our love-life - on the nature of the spiritual powers with which we align ourselves. At times we may be unaware whether we have joined with the powers of

darkness or with the light of God, but this will become obvious by what effect our love has. One who goes to the harlot becomes flesh and spirit with her. One who enters into the union of two before God and in God experiences rich blessings.

God compares his covenant with his people and the unity of Christ with his church to the union of betrothal and marriage. Christ is the single object of the devotion of his church; he kindles in her all the powers of love and of the Spirit. In the same way, true marriage awakens and unfolds all the powers of manhood and womanhood. This will - to create something beyond the self - should awaken all our energies for the will of God.

But even if the way of marriage is barred by bitter experience or inverted inclination, we can still find happiness through God's love. We must not estrange ourselves from life and love in bitterness, nor stifle the best in ourselves by turning to possessive desires. Rather, we must accept that higher calling in which all powers of love are kindled and revived by the generous, sunny love of God. Then none of love's energy will be wasted or left unused; no power of life suppressed. But we must rise up out of the smoke and fog so that our vision becomes free and our hearts wide; we must open our lungs to the pure air. Here, love comes into its own,

love that wants nothing for itself but is fulfilled in lavish giving.

It is true that there is a certain asceticism in the life-affirming love of God, an asceticism that rejects possessive desire. But those who are liberated from the sexual in this way belong to the happiest of people. They are able to love more abundantly than others because their entire time and strength are free, because Agape, God's love, dominate their relationships to others.

Many people who struggle against degeneration and defilement end up embracing a purely negative asceticism. But Jesus did not want this. He had no distrust of life; he joyfully affirmed all those forces of life that are illumined, penetrated, and ruled by God's love. He held marriage and its inviolability in high esteem, and honored it by discerning its desecration in the impure thought and the covetous look. He established brotherly love as the sign of his church, and in his own life he embraced all people without anxiety or compromise. He loved the rich young man and yet challenged him to give away all that he had, and he welcomed those who sought redemption from their sick sensuality when he allowed women of ill repute to kiss his feet and anoint his hair. Even on the cross, he gave his mother a son, and his friend a mother.

Jesus transcended the Eros-life completely. He did not stifle emotional relationships, but rather revealed the love of God free from fleshly desire. And God's love is eternal and imperishable. Greed and vanity, possession and property perish before it, as do the highest gifts of language, knowledge, and prophecy. "He who lives in love lives in God, and God in him." Love begets love. He loved first who himself is love; only through him are we able to love.

The warmth that comes from God's heart cannot be produced in any laboratory, by any decree, or by any organization. No friendly effort or zealous benevolence can imitate it. Whoever has felt its unique life-power radiating from the aged or from the wheelchair of a cripple knows that it is independent of the physical freshness of youth. It is life itself. It is a primary force, an original power of the deepest source.

This Agape knows no bounds of space and time. It is the strength of unconquerable perseverance. It is steadfast faithfulness, and it is equal to every task. It clothes the energy of our love in inexpressible purity, and never injures the modesty or sensitivity of the soul. It is free from inflated arrogance, from pretense, and from presumption for its own advantage. It is real and genuine, and has nothing to do with passing effervescence or superficial enthusiasm.

Agape seeks and demands nothing for itself because it lives completely in the object of its love. It knows nothing of rights, and instead finds happiness in giving. It is never harsh, never excited, never provoked to bitterness. It sees both the essential and the potential in everything, and does not take into account what might still be evil. Yet it has nothing to do with injustice. It sees through everything that still delays the holy calling of a soul. It wards off all that threatens to obstruct a person's destiny. And it can do this because it is one with God, because it hopes and believes in the final fulfillment of humanity.

No founder of a religion, no philosopher or moralist has lived this love as Jesus did - Jesus, who entered the life of the physical and the emotional. And the love of Jesus is forever and is boundless, or it is nothing. It gives and forgives everything, and includes enemies as well as friends. It is not limited by possession or property. It is unconditional and absolute, and is never frustrated by outward circumstances. By it, his followers will be known to the world. In it, we no longer look to be loved but seek to love others.

Responsibility, Desire, and Love

Euripides said that love is the most wonderful thing, but also the bitterest. The gravity of this truth must touch us deeply, for lack of responsibility in love is sin. And the wounding of soul and spirit by irresponsible passion is more murderous than the killing of the body.

Purity is reverence for the meaning of love. The unveiling of the body's secrets and of the mysteries of procreation and birth before many people is a lack of reverence, a betrayal of what is sacred and will remain sacred only if kept for the one great experience of two. A temple is desecrated when it becomes a public place exposed to every profane look.

Reverence for the emotional and physical aspects of love is necessary because the experience of love spans starkly opposing poles. The love-life reaches from the lowest degradation to the rarest heights; from the filthiest breath of plague to the purest air of the spirit. We owe to love the finest productions of art in poetry and music and painting, as well as the entire cycle of nature and life; we recognize in love the basis of civilization and the family. And at the same time we see in love - or what is called love - a consuming flame that drives countless unhappy people into ruin and crime. Love is either abundance of life, of generation, birth, and creation; or

else what is called love is sin and death - the poisoning and killing of life.

Moralism has nothing to say to these questions. Civil codes and social traditions cannot be authoritative in regard to the basic forces of life. One need only think of the bondage and slavery of marriage under the German Civil Code, against which the women's movement rightly fought. They wanted marriages founded on faithfulness, not based on the duty of civil law. But what is at stake is not the different forms of church or civil marriage. What we must find is a morality that is altogether higher and deeper.

Sensuality throws itself into ever new channels of untruthfulness and perverse aberration when suppressed by moral compulsion, convention, or legal control. The monastic ideal is no better than the libertine ideal: sexual repression, like sexual subjection, begets oppression and falsity in all other areas of life. To be cold and without desire can never be considered a virtue.

We cannot deny that legalistic morality and neoplatonic introspection have influenced institutional Christianity. But intellectual consideration or social tradition can never be decisive in this fight between life and death. It is not true that "Whoever has never exchanged forbidden kisses, never been intoxicated with sinful love... has forgotten how to live!" That

which is called sin by the creator of life is always one thing: sacrilege against the soul.

Eros can have no exceptional position in life. The sexual life, like everything else, is subject to the laws of soul and spirit. Thus weakness in this area throws a harshly illuminating light on the lives of people who otherwise seem to show courage and strength of conscience. Impurity never pollutes us from without, nor can it ever be wiped away at will. It breaks out of our innermost depths like an infected sore, poisoning the whole bloodstream, and leaves behind indelible traces on the character and soul.

We are more than body and soul, more than animal. We are spirit. And intellect and reason are not the whole of our being. What is deepest in us is our consciousness of God, his feeling for the universe, his expectation of future unity in all things. What distinguishes us from animals is our longing for unity of body and spirit, our sensing of the Spirit as the great eternal connection of all living things in love. Even the “atheist” Voltaire confessed that in a land of atheists, love would lead to the worship of God.

Thus Kant was wrong in recognizing only cold duty and sensual inclination. The living soul strives for what is ultimate, for the divine love that is free of lust and self-seeking - for the communal spirit, the outpouring

will to love, which stands as much opposed to the covetous sensual will as to moralistic law and order. Our love life will be healthy and happy only when it is guided by this ultimate will.

Our love for each other must be redeemed. With Augustine, we must pray that its “ardent fervor for the world become an ardent fervor for the Master of this world”:

Love, but take care what it is you love. Love is the self of the soul, the hand of the soul. When it holds one thing, it cannot hold something else. If it is to hold what one gives it, it has to put down what it is holding. The one kind of love is turned toward community, the other is limited to the ego; the one looks to the good of all and thinks of the spiritual fellowship, the other tries to bring even the cause of fellowship under itself. The worth of persons is not to be assessed according to what they know, but according to what they love.

Essay, 1928

The New Morality

Until Jesus appeared, the greatest goodness anyone could offer God was moral endeavor. People strove strenuously toward an ideal, scrupulously obeying commands

and prohibitions, repressing and stifling contrary inclinations, and frantically attempting to deny and mortify the flesh. They tried with human strength to ascend the mountain where the light would not be obscured nor the air polluted. But Jesus brought a justice better than anything human effort could achieve, and different in every sense from what the law and the prophets offered.

Even so, the law and the prophets reveal God's being and will. Jesus did not undo or obscure in any way the clarity of their revelation; those who try to break down these moral commandments are desecrating that which God has laid in the conscience. In doing so, they lose their security against the powers of lying, hatred, and greed, which then hound them from one situation to another until they finally fall prey to death.

Not one letter of these ethical commands and moral prohibitions can be canceled until the essential spirit of these laws has been revealed and has taken on flesh and life. These commands express the holy "thou shalt" of our inner calling, the holy "must" of our inner destiny - the only absolute that lives in the human soul. More and more people reject one after the other of these laws today, declaring them null and void. They will be poorly prepared for God's kingdom.

Before the word became flesh in Jesus, God expressed the essence of his holiness in a form at once demanding and forbidding. His will had to be expressed in the letter of the law, because there was no living heart to give it expression. The law must still take over where greed rules, and where the truthfulness and purity of Jesus has not yet taken root. The state with its coercive power and the law with its statutes are a necessary safety valve for the chaotic mass of humanity which, like steam in a boiler, would explode if unrestrained by the iron vessel of governmental force and the safety valves of its laws.

But as soon as people are gripped by God's love, all of life is different. They grow close to one another and become organs of a mystical body, ruled by the spirit of unity - one heart and one soul. The necessity of force and coercion, of law and moral striving, is removed; the true spirit, which the law expressed imperfectly, comes to rule. The new righteousness of Jesus, the goodness of heart and divine strength that embrace all human existence, are not bound by restraints of legal relationships.

The scribes and Pharisees had a firm conviction, a moral direction, and an iron will. They were better than their reputation; they were morally upright, devout figures who commanded respect - men who felt deeply their responsibility for their people. But they lacked the free

spirit that blows from God: the gift of life that grows and bears fruit.

The new justice is God's goodness. God's nature cannot be imitated or created, and nothing can replace his power. So too, the works of the first love cannot be artificially manufactured. No intelligent reflection, no resolution or effort, can produce the warmth of heart that is God. Where God is alive, active love takes the place of dead moralism.

Essay, 1920

6

Love Is Work

Working together with others is the best way to test our faith, to find out whether or not we are ready to live a life of Christian fellowship. Work is the crucial test of faith because such a life can come into being only where people work for love. Love demands action, and the only really valid action is work. Christian fellowship means fellowship in work...

Talk, May 1934

* * * * *

Though he could never escape his privileged upbringing or scholarly bent, Arnold loved the working class. He abhorred the sterility and mechanization of factory work, but rejected

the notion that all physical work was demeaning; he asserted that farm or garden work was not only healthy but necessary for the development of the soul. Thus he found joy and relaxation in turning compost and gardening, and did not hesitate to hand a second pitchfork to the many visitors -including young idealists and intellectuals-who came to him hoping for theological discussion. Irmgard Keiderling, his secretary, remembers seeing him at the manure pile with the mayor of Quedlinburg, a town councilor from Munich, and even the local doctor from Hanau.

Justice and love demand that everyone take part in simple practical work with a spade, hatchet, or rake. Everyone should be ready to spend a few hours each day in either the garden or on the field: digging and spreading manure, plowing, or hoeing potatoes; on the reaper, at the circular saw, or in the locksmith's shop. Everyone should be ready to devote a few hours every day to this practical work; those who have done purely mental work till now will feel its humanizing effect especially.

In this way it will be possible for each person's unique gifts to be kindled. The light that flickers within each heart will then exhibit its once-hidden glow in scholarly research or in music, in expressive words, in wood, or in stone.

Essay, 1920

In his enslavement to the principles of investment and profit, the much-admired industrial magnate Henry Ford has achieved the very utmost in soul-killing enslavement to dead machinery. He has robbed work of its soul to such an extent that 79 percent of all the operations in his industrial plants are performed by completely unskilled labor. Forty-three percent of his workers require only a day's training; another 36 percent require only eight days. Only 21 percent of all the workers, mechanics, and foremen he employs are allowed to put even a little thought and skill into his famous cars. The great majority - the other 79 percent - are imprisoned in their work as soulless slaves. They are condemned to a humdrum existence, sacrificed to capitalist profit.

Lecture, March 1925

Community as Work

In this address from 1921, Arnold speaks of the church as a living organism: a dynamic, changing, growing, and living body that reflects the communal order of the natural world. His metaphors reflect a thorough knowledge of modern biology, and he draws heavily on this knowledge to emphasize the necessity of community not only for plants and animals, but for women and men as well.

Community presupposes life. We know that life is community of life, and that there is no life that is not living community. We can see this clearly from the community the hermit crab enjoys with the sea urchin in the depths of the sea. These remarkable crabs have soft and sensitive backs, and so defend themselves by crawling into the shell of a dead snail. But even there they are not yet safe from the polyps, those extraordinarily dangerous and ravenous creatures of the deep sea, which can pull them out of their shells with their tentacles. So the hermit crab forms a settlement community with the urchin, which fastens itself to the snail shell in which the crab lives. This urchin, with its prickly arms, clutches the whole shell so firmly that it seems almost impossible to loosen it. Thus the urchin protects the hermit crab from danger.

The crab also contributes to this mutual relationship. It provides mobility for the otherwise stationary urchin, allowing it to catch any prey that might cross the path of the wandering crab. Each creature shares its surplus with the other. These two creatures arise from such irreconcilably different genera that no sexual relationship could ever exist between them. Yet from time immemorial, they have represented a relationship of life as community and community as work.

But we do not need to descend into the depths of the sea to see other examples of the same kind of thing. In the mountains, for example, we can find the lichens: fungi that live in community with algae. These two very different plants are unable to live without each other. Only in community are they capable of life.

On a different level, colonies of ants or bees live in a primitive and yet powerful common life, sacrificing themselves as workers to provide for the propagation of the greater colony by the queen. These insects show us humans something which, in our desire for progress, we have lost with miserable weakness: the social instinct for the context of life, and for the common challenge.

There are many other examples from the practical life of the animal world. But we do not need to look for extraordinary and interesting examples in the world of nature alone. There is also a church-community of men and women on this earth! Humanity is of course divided; we have not yet arrived at earth-wide community. But the fact that this church-community exists is reality. And if we want to understand life-community, the mystery of this emerging, growing church-community must dawn on us.

This church has nothing to do with any denomination or sect. The mark of the emerging church and the coming kingdom is the building up of quiet, hidden life-

relationships, beginning with tiny cells which constantly renew their relationships with each other, become organs and members, and then again become one in a single body.

This church cannot be brought about by authoritative decisions, laws, or regulations. No human effort can bring it into existence. No dictatorship can prepare for it or create it. It is far from anything our self-will can achieve - far from all the efforts of self-seeking, power-hungry men or groups. It can come only as a gift of the Creator's spirit of love.

But for this very reason, we must guard against the false notion that God is a purely transcendental power, removed from matter and the stuff of this earth. The coming community of life will be a kingdom of work on this earth. Work will be the binding factor in the cells of human community. The only work a man can do with his whole soul, work full of spirit and pulsing life, comes from love. And there is no love that does not get to work.

Love is work: practical, strenuous work of muscle and mind, heart and soul. The kingdom of love, therefore, must be a kingdom of work. Work, truly unselfish work, animated by the spirit of brotherliness, will be the mark of the future, the character of the mankind to be. Work as spirit, work as living reality, such as we all have lost;

7

From Isolation to Community

Religion and devout feelings are useless unless they are expressed in action and in truth, that is, in real community. Jesus says, Love God! And his other command is exactly the same: Love your neighbor! We cannot love God if we do not love our neighbor.

Public address, September 1935

8

The Fight Against Mammon

All his life, Arnold fought against mammonism, that is, “the enslavement of the soul to circumstance.” This fight was not lessened even by a life of poverty. His children remember that their mother would occasionally bring up her worries about financial debts at breakfast - the one time of day when the family might have relaxed. Arnold’s response was predictable: “Emmy, worry is also mammonism. Let’s spend time with the children.”

God or Mammon

“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and look down on the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” This great and dynamic struggle of which

9

God With Us

How do we come to Jesus? To experience the heart of God we need Jesus; to experience Jesus, we need to experience that moment in which he sacrificed his heart. And that was the moment when he sealed the surrender of his life with the last drop of his blood, when his eyes dimmed and his heart broke - the hour when he also comforted a criminal. It was Golgotha: that time and place in which we enter into pure, unclouded fellowship with God's eternity, God's heart, God's love. Golgotha is the window through which we can look from this darkened earth into the radiance of God's heart.

“If Christ were born a thousand times in Bethlehem but not in you, you would still be lost eternally.” That is

The Church Comes Down to Us

Arnold always emphasized Gemeinde - the living congregation of believers - over Kirche, the church as an institution or establishment. He believed that the true church transcends time and space, uniting all those who call on God and receive his Spirit. Thus the church is past and present and future, and lives on earth as well as in heaven. For him, the high point of the ecclesiastical year was Pentecost: the celebration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the foundation of the "living church."

The following address, a response to a letter from his friend, the Swiss Religious Socialist Leonard Ragaz, touches on these themes. Ragaz had asked whether Arnold's community, the Bruderhof, considered itself to be "the" church - as opposed to just one of many other members in the "family of Christ." The question, Ragaz conceded, was a delicate one: "If such a great thing would be given to you, should you not handle it with the utmost re-

11

Church and State

The New Incarnation

In this talk from 1934, Arnold addresses two visitors from England, and compares the church - as God's embassy on earth - to the British Embassy in Berlin.

The birth of Jesus shows how every new birth from the Spirit takes place. The word came to Mary. Mary believed. She received the word, the life-giving Spirit. And because she had faith, the living word took flesh and form from her.

Today too the living word wants to take form. Today too the living word wants to become flesh. Today too the eternal Christ wants to have a body. It is for this reason

12

Expectation

Arnold's faith was in the future, yet he lived fully in the present. Even after the rise of Nazism had forced the Bruderhof to send its young men and children abroad, he pressed forward with plans to expand the buildings and business operations at the Rhön Bruderhof in Germany. He liked to quote Martin Luther: "If I knew the world would end tomorrow, I would still plant my apple tree today."

Faith in God means faith for the future. Those who live in God do not look back, but forward. Those who are alive do not look back over the short span of their own life, nor even over the greater span of religious development, to find a past realization of their current longing. They look forward into time, toward the goal, toward the destiny of humankind as it should be and as it shall be.

