



by Eberhard Arnold

POEMS AND
RHYMED
PRAYERS

Weihenacht! Ein Nacht der Märkte,
Die den Reichen arm gemacht:
Du dunkler ... Märkte
Und erhebt ...



Nach uns
Niemand
Du ergabst
Unser Schwammere ...

Du Du bist der Sterne Leuchte
Du Du bist des Lebens Kraft
Was man ganz unmöglich dachte,
[Jesus richtig ewig schafft.]
Keine Nacht für ewig schafft!

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Introduction

December 1935 was cold and wet and depressing at the Rhön Bruderhof. The brotherhood was still reeling from the recent loss of Eberhard Arnold, their “Word Leader.” Debts were mounting, and food and fuel were in short supply. Internal struggles had weakened the resolve of many, and outwardly, too, the circle limped along, most of the able-bodied men having fled the country to avoid conscription into Hitler’s army. Nazis and nosy neighbors spied constantly on the community, and there was a lingering sense of dread in the air.

But all was not gloom and doom. In a letter she wrote to a friend in England the same month, Edna Percival, a guest at the Rhön, spoke with optimism of how the Bruderhof would not give up:

The wonderful thing is that for us Eberhard can never die. In all his poems and songs, which we use almost daily, the essence of everything he lived is expressed, and stands for all time.

This book contains a comprehensive sampling of those poems, many of them in English for the first time. Writing about the earliest ones, Eberhard’s eldest son, Hardy, explained:

They stem from the time when, as a student, my father was involved in the Salvation Army [1903–1904] and the German Christian Student Union [1905–1906] mainly in Halle, Breslau, and Erlangen. They are about repentance and conversion, and a burning love for Jesus. They speak of discipleship and struggle, the outpouring of the Spirit, and

the coming into being of a true *Gemeinde* – not a church or sect, but a consecrated body. They also voice jubilant praise and thanks to God. They are imbued with a fiery spirit.

So are the “engagement poems” of 1907–1909, which follow. The outpourings of a young man so passionately in love that he begged his fiancée to write to him “at least once a day,” they are emotionally charged. But they are not conventional love poems. Almost all end by pointing their recipient (and by extension, every reader) toward Christ.

Eberhard wrote numerous essays, but almost no poems, from 1910 to 1920. After marrying on December 20, 1909, he and Emmy raised a family of five and moved from one place to another: Halle, Leipzig, the Tirol, and finally Berlin. There, as literary director of the Furche Publishing House, he acquired and edited books, contributed regularly to several periodicals, and kept up a demanding schedule of public lectures and “open evenings” for discussion and debate.

1920, a watershed year, saw the Arnolds abandon the security of the Berlin suburbs for a life of unknowns in the village of Sannerz, where they embarked on what Eberhard called an “adventure of faith” – a life of voluntary poverty and community. By 1921, he was writing poems again. Many mirror the struggles of the fledgling circle: their search for unity in the middle of discord; their

insistence on genuineness in an era of crumbling formalities; their desire for silence amid upheaval and noise. Many express joy – in music and color, in circling dancers and orbiting stars. But there are also echoes of what Eberhard met in the cities where his speaking engagements took him: the disillusionment of a generation whose youth was overshadowed by Germany's crushing defeat at the end of World War I, a growing dissatisfaction with tradition, a disgust for religious hypocrisy, and a bewildering jumble of new political ideas.

Summarizing the poems from the next period, the last decade of his father's life, Hardy notes that they

have their root in the struggles and victories of the communal life at Sannerz and the Rhön. They are mainly about the breaking in of God's kingdom of justice on earth, and the ongoing struggle between light and darkness, which takes place in every heart.

He identifies other themes as well: the presence of God in nature, the bankruptcy of the existing social order, the necessity of personal rebirth, and the importance of mission.

Eberhard's poems cover a broad spectrum, from the unabashed evangelistic fervor of "When, O when" to the expressionistic imagery of "All is silent"; from the sophistication of "Cliffs are clamoring" to the utter simplicity of "It is finished." But no matter their style, they all glow with the same deep fervor.

Eberhard's younger sister Hannah once said of her brother that his faith was "a joyful, victorious Christianity that had its roots in the certainty of forgiveness of sins." As for his zeal in sharing it, she said, "There was no one who was safe from him, no one whom he would not confront with the commands of Jesus, and the need to decide for or against him." If this book confronts even one reader with the same, it will have served its purpose.

May 2003

In 1899, at sixteen, Eberhard experienced a life-changing conversion. As his early poems show, however, he was just as concerned with the salvation of those around him. At first forming a small Bible study group with fellow high school students, he soon became involved with the Salvation Army, whom he had long admired. By 1903 he was speaking at their meetings, distributing their newspaper, and even preaching in the streets.

On to victory!

We've gathered for the holy fight
in the power of God's name.
He makes us fit for battle,
gives us the Spirit's holy flame.
The Spirit rouses heart and soul
and drives us on toward his goal,
so praise him: Hallelujah!

Our hope is in the Lord alone,
who leads to victory at length.
And thus, to overcome the Foe,
to God we must give all our strength.
For when we vanquish Satan's might,
the Lord himself has won the fight,
so praise him: Hallelujah!

The Spirit shall ignite our zeal
for each new battle with his fire
and draw together all who fight,
and fan their flames of courage higher.
Thus shall we slay the Enemy,
armed by the Lord for victory,
so praise him: Hallelujah!

God fills us with triumphant joy,
for boundless victory is ours.
He lets us snatch the devil's prey
to safety from hell's evil powers.
So we shall stand and fight till death,
steadfast and loyal to our last breath,
and praise him: Hallelujah!

Breslau, February 26, 1903

How Jesus loves you! For your sake
he died upon the cross.
He will forgive you, for he sought
you when you were still lost.

Refrain:

O sinner, come to Christ today.
He'll save you from distress.
He wants to bless you here and now
with perfect happiness.

You know that you can find no peace.
Your heart is weighted down.
But it was you who chose this hell,
to sin were gladly bound.

Why do you linger, holding back?
Should you not rather haste?
He waits for you with open arms
to make you richly blest.

Breslau, February 1903

Remembering her father speaking at open-air revival meetings on the Döläuer Heide (near Halle) in 1914, Eberhard's oldest daughter Emi-Margret writes (1980): "Sometimes Papa suggested songs he himself had written. He would read out a verse, and then everyone would sing it to a well-known tune, and then he would have it repeated with variations: 'Once more! Now just the men! Now the women! Now all together!'" About this particular song, Emi-Margret writes, "The last verse especially was sung again and again. We did not sing this song in later years, but it made a deep impression on me. I wanted so badly to be completely pure, and again and again something happened that spoiled this."

From my heart to God

When, O when, will my heart be made
pure, truly pure?
Would by his blood that I could be
pure, truly pure!
How I am pained by weakness and sin,
how my heart cries to be holy within!
Filled with great longing I shout to heaven:
pure, make me pure!

Wash me clean, dear Savior, today:
clean, truly clean!
Open my heart to your will, I pray –
clean, truly clean!
Give me a strong, burning love to the Lord,
love that rejoices to do what is hard.
Lord, make my life shine for you like a star:
make it truly clean!

Jesus will cleanse you; he's heard your plea:
pure, truly pure!
Saved through his blood today you can be
pure, truly pure!
Cast yourself down at the feet of your king,
shout out in faith, and triumphantly sing.
You shall be made, by sheer grace, through him,
pure, truly pure!

Breslau, March 1903

Prayer

All that I have, my Lord and Savior,
I bring to thee freewillingly.
It will – although a feeble offering –
gain new strength and worth in thee.

Refrain:

O Jesus, enter with thy blessing,
revive thy work here in this place.
Let every soul awake with joy
and know the power of thy grace.

O Jesus, Savior, how I long
to breathe from thine own mighty breath!
Touch me with thy spirit. Give me
life anew: save me from death.

What thou lack'st, Lord, is a people
consecrated to thy name –
a people truthful and obedient,
a people free from guilt and shame.

Take from us what saddens thee,
renew our spirits, quench our thirst.
Keep us from deeds we'll later rue,
for love of thee, who loved us first.

Give us strength that we may conquer
all our foes – give victories,
and strength to quiet every sorrow.
Comfort every heart that grieves.

Breslau, ca. May 1905

Jesus, my all in all

If I were not your own, O Jesus, Savior,
but stood apart, insistent on my honor,
I'd soon be lost, by wretchedness maligned,
to Satan consigned.

Yes, Jesus, if I were bereft and empty
of your power, which gave me life and saved me,
I'd face death's door without the peace you
lend –
eternally condemned.

Praise God for his great love, which brings
redemption,
forgives and cleanses all, without exception!
In his great love he gives, in place of strife,
everlasting life.

Hence will I every other force withstand
except your call, and take your loving hand.
In your blood's power I'll trust eternally
and build on thee.

Breslau, ca. May 1905

In April 1905, Eberhard began his studies at Breslau, where he found others who shared his zeal for Jesus. Their meeting place – and his spiritual home for the next two years – was the local chapter of the German Christian Student Union.

Jesus, my refuge

In thee, O Lord, I find new power
when my own power is spent and gone.
I see help coming from nowhere else,
to thee alone in hope I turn.

For thee, Lord, I reach out in longing,
though all around me breaks and falls.
Thy arms shall hold me safe forever;
thy love remains, whatever befalls.

In thee, O Lord, is grace abundant.
On thee I trust as on a rock.
The way thou lead'st me on is straight,
my hand in thy firm hand is locked.

So I shall keep, steadfast and faithful,
upon the path that thou hast shown.
Into thy hands I lay my burdens,
entrust all things to thee alone.

Breslau, July 30, 1905

Jesus, my strength

Hear me, strong, beloved Savior,
give thy spirit's strength to me.
Grant that while I live I never
fall again so far from thee
that a gaping chasm yawns
between thy true word and my deeds.
Rather, in thee daring all things,
let me serve obediently.

Hear me, strong Redeemer, let me
hold to thee eternally.
Though the Enemy grow fiercer,
thou wilt not let go of me.
No matter what my need, I'll build
on thee, for faith means victory.
No force can overcome the one
who, unto death, still trusts in thee.

Breslau, July 1905

Jesus, my light

My sight is dim and clouded;
my heavy heart, weighed down.
Nothing can give me comfort
except thy love alone.
And so I beg thee, my heart's friend:
such peace on me bestow
that nothing ever cloud the sun
that shines on me, below.

O Jesus, Savior, thou alone
art my heart's light and joy.
Nothing can thy brightness
ever hinder or destroy.
And I shall trust thee gladly –
for my strength comes from thee –
and build my life on thee alone,
who worketh wondrously.

Breslau, July 1905

Golgotha

May honor and praise be thine alone,
O Savior mine, eternally.
May, hour by hour, thy glory grow
until the whole world knows of thee!

Lord Jesus, how I wish I had
the voice to fittingly proclaim
aloud the grace of Golgotha,
where for my sins you bore all blame.

Yes, what took place there on the cross
shall be forever in my sight.
And when I brood on past regrets
I shall be quickened by its light.

And when temptations plague my heart
(though I have long since died with thee)
I think upon thy cross, which robs
the devil of his claims on me.

Whate'er befall me, praise or blame,
my old self hangs upon thy Tree,
and thus I'll cry through every land,
"The Lamb of God has died for me!"

And so each day I'm given new faith
to live from him, and him alone.
Yes, he's my vine – my source of life –
for I could not live on my own.

Breslau, October 17, 1905

His blood

O Jesus mine, to thee be honor!
I praise thy spirit's might and fire,
which point me to thy blood, thy cross,
where God creates new life entire.

Praised be the blood that thou hast shed,
which overcomes the power of sin.
Our eyes fixed on the cross, we battle
and watch, though all around looks grim.

To see the cross is to see triumph:
there every evil's done away.
There no one ever is defeated,
by sin's delusion led astray.

My Savior died to conquer sin;
I know, for I too tasted death,
but will henceforth – O hallelujah! –
live for him with every breath.

So let this vow hold true for me:
no longer shall my life be mine,
for thou liv'st in me, dearest Jesus.
Beneath thy cross, I'm always thine.

Breslau, October 19, 1905

On June 12, 1907, in a letter to Emmy (then his fiancée), Eberhard writes, "Look only to Jesus! Heb. 12:2! He, the crucified and exalted one who gave us our life of faith, will complete it as well. You will see the same struggle – often rather starkly expressed – in my poems of 1905. An oppressive awareness of sin is fully conquered only when one looks to the cross."

Jesus alone

I will have no one but Jesus,
him I'll cherish day by day,
all my gifts, all my possessions
for his love will fling away.

I will love no one but Jesus,
him I'll serve by day and night.
Here on earth, as there in heaven,
every place can show his might.

I will think of none but Jesus,
my own need will now forget,
in him only sink my being,
for his sake is death well met.

I will guide to none but Jesus
all those who to me are dear,
joyfully prepare their pathway
unto him, whose grace is near.

I will lead to none but Jesus
all those whom I love on earth,
that we all may praise together
him who saves us by his birth.

I will have no one but Jesus.
Hence with lust for earth's delights!
Jesus only shall refresh me,
make me happy at his side.

I will love no one but Jesus,
with the world break once for all,
through a holy impulse guided,
always ready for his call.

Halle, October 28–November 1, 1905

○ Lord, when you are all I have,
my own star quickly fades from view.
At your cross my thirst is quenched:
I seek for nothing there but you.

When in the fight against the devil
another gains a victory,
or when the rescued throngs bow down
before your cross – what joy for me!

I praise you, Lord, for steadfast fighters
who, through your strength, stand in the breach.
O lead them on to countless others
before death sweeps them out of reach!

Yes, Savior, send whoever you will
to bring redemption to poor souls.
Stir many hands to gather in
all sinners into your great halls!

No matter what the future holds,
may I, like John, lie on your breast.
Earth's greatest conquests cannot tempt me;
least in your kingdom, I am blessed.

I'll stand unnoticed happily,
rejoice when other men succeed.
May all I am return to dust,
that I may lie down at your feet.

Yes, Lord, if you choose to call me
to serve your kingdom's coming day,
I'll bow before you at your altar,
hear your word, at once obey.

Then you yourself will shape and mold me
till my haughty heart gives in.
Then will I yield to thee entirely
in happiness, and even in pain.

Halle, October 31, 1905

In the fall of 1905, Eberhard moved to Halle, where (at his father's insistence, though against his own inclination) he continued his studies in theology. As in Breslau, he was soon active in the local chapter of the German Christian Student Union.

Pure happiness is mine again –
a free delight in Jesus' word
that flows afresh in joyous song.
Where'er I am, I praise the Lord.

I'll witness to my Savior
and to his boundless, faithful love.
I'll bow before the Lord each day
and send my thanks to heaven above.

It is the devil's trick to think
the humble should be always still.
The Lord disperses Satan's lies
and bids me witness at his will.

I'll put my hand in Jesus', then,
and trust his endless loyalty.
However dangerous it seem,
I'll follow him, where'er he be.

Halle, November 1, 1905

O Jesus, Jesus, none but he
shall light my path, and my strength be!
O Jesus, Jesus, he alone –
forever my all and only one.

Halle, November 1, 1905

Jesus, my king

Brothers, Christ has let me take
him to my heart – the Lord of lords –
has welcomed me, my thirst to slake;
my tired soul at his cross restores.

I, though meaner than the meanest,
may still come before his throne;
though impure before his pureness
in his footsteps still may go.

Yes, the King accepts my kisses,
lets me rest against his heart.
He turns from no one, no one misses,
but to *all* his good imparts.

Yes, he bids me stay beside him,
lets me stand by him each day,
and though the Foe's attacks be grim,
Jesus drives them all away.

Halle, November 1905

To the cross

When on the cross I fix my gaze,
freed from the curse of sin and shame,
then dark will yield, and light's bright rays
drive back the shadows whence they came.

With all my strength, I will defy
the ego's baseness and its guile.
"Think of yourself!" – its artful cry
strikes Jesus' face, seeks to defile.

My inborn nature – lust and pride
and all their evils – I detest.
I'll not be whole until I lie,
dead to myself, on Jesus' breast.

Accept me, then, my Lord and my King:
your death for me will yet suffice.
Though I know naught of suffering,
I'll not give ear to Satan's lies.

You conquer, and I'm overpowered!
To your own cross you take me too.
In joyful as in trying hours,
there, dead to self, I live for you.

Halle, November 1905

Lord Jesus, take my very life.
I loathe myself right to the core,
and so I give myself to you –
a holy bond forevermore.

I know that you can take, O Lord,
the vilest man and cleanse his soul.
Yes, by your power you can transform him,
make him righteous, pure, and whole.

Yes, even a sinner as mean as I
can be made free by your great grace,
so take me into your children's realm,
there to dwell in strength and faith.

All honor and praise be yours, my king,
for your blood's power, your fire pure!
And praise the cross you point us to,
where man, new made, is true and sure!

Halle, November 1905

Lord, bring me to my knees in dust,
bow low my head, and hear my prayer!
Though others sing of your great grace,
I still fall into every snare.

Of all men, I'm by far the worst –
it cries to heaven above, my guilt.
How can you still have hope for me,
who, seeing myself, with loathing fill?

And yet how long you've carried me,
a serpent, on your loving breast –
you've given me courage ever anew,
my heart's desire, and my mind's rest.

But I returned your patient love
with base betrayal; never lent
a hand to guard you, care for you –
put off remorse, would not repent.

I doubted in the purpose
of fighting sin unceasingly.
I thought: why bother, when with each step,
I squander what you offer me?

But no! Even I, accurséd wretch,
must come just as I am to you
whose love disarms and conquers all,
the devil himself o'erpowers too.

For I believe that I, too, can
be helped and rescued by your cross.
I'll build henceforth on grace, and spurn
all sin's desire in me, all dross.

I will believe! Cost what it may,
I'm yours, for by your sacrifice
upon the cross my heart's been cleansed,
found rest and peace beyond all price.

Halle, November 1905

Christ on the cross

Don't you see the Savior hanging
deathly pale upon the cross?
Was it not your sin that drove him
to this harsh and dreadful choice?

See him, king of all creation,
held fast by Satan's angry grip,
surrounded by death's ice-cold air –
yet he does nothing to resist.

Don't you know the agonies
of death he bore for love of you?
That for your soul he endured it,
to be wounded, bloodied so?

Have you truly comprehended –
has it struck your inmost heart,
that he suffered all this anguish
so that peace might be your part?

Surely it must be your longing
that his death mean life for you,
and that all your fears be ended,
vanquished by your shepherd true.

Let his bitter torment, then,
work in you and bring forth pure fruit.
Whatever causes him displeasure
grasp at once, weed out, uproot.

Once your old and evil works,
laid at the cross, are truly dead,
then you will be fully healed,
free from worry, pain, and dread.

Then Christ's goal will be achieved –
but only then, and not before,
which is why he bore such sorrow,
had to die in anguish sore.

Halle, November 1905

Rescue them!

Lord, the souls we bring to thee
today will listen to thy word.
We commend them to thee humbly.
Change their hearts, let them be stirred.

Jesus, let them ne'er forget
how, on the cross, for them you died.
May they contemplate this truth
and drive out Satan with his lies.

Bring thy peace to them this day
and set thy grace before them too,
so that they might, here and in heaven,
be counted in thy multitude.

Halle, November 1905

Rescue, Lord, the lost of earth,
those trapped in sin, those far from you.
Though born of dust – as are we all –
through you they'll find redemption too.

Bitter shame still separates
so many souls from your kind eyes,
but you need men prepared for battle,
glad to sacrifice their lives.

Have mercy, then, on all who sin.
Let witnesses your grace declare.
Save them, turn them into children –
in your kingdom let them share.

Halle, November 1905

Christ in the ship

Be not afraid, for naught will hurt you,
the Lord himself is in the ship!
Where Jesus is, no storm can harm you,
no wind can throw you on the cliff.

Hold on in faith, he will be with you.
He stands in front, right in the bow!
In all your need he'll not forsake you.
Leave Satan's fear behind you now.

Away with all your fearful trembling,
for in your boat is Christ himself!
In stillness and in stormy weather
he leads us safe past rocky shelf.

Halle, November 1905

Before moving to Halle in the fall of 1905, Eberhard spent a vacation on the North Sea island of Langeoog. He later wrote that seeing the sea whipped into high waves by storm winds, and then turning calm – all in obedience to the forces of nature – helped him submit to his father's wishes (i.e. to continue studying theology) and to trust in God's leading.

Out of death, life

Completely dead to sin,
I live for Christ. The crown
of victory is his.
To him I must bow down.

With joy I will believe it:
his power has conquered all.
Of this no foe may rob me,
for God breaks every thrall.

I know without a doubt
that Christ's word never lies.
It is *my* life I ought to hate,
for its deceitful guise.

I'll give myself to God –
for no other will I strive.
Each breath I draw is his,
who alone keeps me alive.

I'll put my hope in Jesus,
for apart from his own power
there's nothing else to build on,
but what he gives each hour.

I firmly trust he'll triumph.
His grave is empty, bare.
The devil is defeated:
Christ conquers everywhere!

Halle, December 1905

Freed by the cross

Your bitter pains, dear Jesus –
you suffered them for me –
that, on your heart now resting,
I might be healed and freed.

You seek to free my heart
from misery each day;
whatever grieves and pains me
you stamp out and take away.

From all my care and burdens
I find relief in you;
on each and every morning
you give me peace anew.

You bought me full salvation
upon the cross. 'Twas there
you suffered death for my sake,
and now your life I share.

Halle, December 1905

With faith for each soul,
I trust and believe.
I've chosen to live for them,
never to leave.

I love all my brothers –
for them will I fight,
steadfastly seeking
each one in the light.

Halle, ca. 1905

Lord, let thy blessing rest on me.
Give me the pow'r of thy spirit's flame,
for I would fan no other fire
but that which burns in Jesus' name.

O God, protect in me the faith
that rests in joy upon thy word.
Let no one shatter my belief:
grant victories throughout the world.

Uphold me, Jesus, in my love
to God the Father and to thee,
that with the Spirit's pure desire
I might pray hourly: stay with me!

O let me live in hope that thou
wilt soon return in majesty.
How gladly then I'll go to meet thee,
be with thee eternally.

Halle, at the start of the semester, April 1906

On June 2, 1907, Eberhard wrote to Emmy, "I believe I shall never regret having worked with souls for Jesus, and I must hold to the fact that it was the Spirit that urged me to it, even though much of it was weak and wrong."

At the start of the summer semester, 1906, Eberhard moved into the Silesian Seminary of the Lutheran Church. He was elected chairman of the Halle chapter of the German Christian Student Union around the same time. In his inaugural address he said, "Only Jesus! That is the motto of our movement."

○ Lord, you know my heart's request:
that you might lead and gently guide,
for you must show which way is best.
○ steer my feet; stay at my side.

Yes, Jesus, come, give me your blessing.
Nail me firmly to your cross,
and when I rear my proud, vain head,
purge me of all foolishness.

From dungeon dark you led me upward
into the sunshine's bright, clear light.
○ Savior mine, your strength o'erpowers
all human strength, all human might.

Now, as I journey onward, lead me
and never let me turn from you.
Your faithfulness is always there.
Your staff will guide me safely through.

My shepherd, you will always hold me.
You are my refuge, safe and true.
With joy I feel your arms enfold me:
you'll never let me stray from you.

Halle, August 15, 1906

Jesus longs to make you his –
entirely, utterly his own.
So bring him all your love and gifts,
and lay your self before his throne.

It takes a fierce resolve to yield –
to give yourself, and never swerve.
It takes the death of selfishness
and your life's blood to truly serve.

Yet I would give these gladly, Lord.
Take life and limb: they are yours.
Whate'er you wish – so be it.
All I have is mine no more.

And though it cost me happiness,
you remain my heart's true balm,
for you are near me, even in grief,
you give me courage, peace, and calm.

I'll sacrifice my all for you –
dear Jesus, you are all I own.
I have no other goal in life
but you, my Savior – you alone.

Halle, August 16, 1906

I still lack love, O Jesus mine –
too little is my love for thee.
So place more firmly, Lord and King,
I beg, thy gentle yoke on me.

Kindle in me the holy flame
that burns forever and will not cease.
No price can be too high, so long
as thy love in me doth increase.

So let your flame consume me, that
no pow'r on earth can quench its glow.
Yes, none but thee shall I call Master.
A man complete, I am thine own.

Yes, Lord, I give myself to thee
in greatest joy and happiness.
O take, I pray, my life entire,
and let thy fire burn in my breast.

Halle, August 17, 1906

Eberhard prayed, as the last line of this poem says, for God's fire to "burn in my breast," and according to those who knew him, it did – so much so that he was soon regarded (along with the evangelist Ludwig von Gerdtell, his mentor) as "the" voice of the revival movement then sweeping Halle.

Victory!

Satan's cunning never ceases –
let the violent coward rage.
I will raise my voice in song,
my redeemer, Christ, to praise.

If he tricks me or misleads me
to give in to sinful pride,
or tries to feed my vanity,
to the cross I'll turn my eyes.

For there, where Jesus bore such pain,
I drowned my ego in death's night.
'Tis there he conquered all for me,
there that he broke Satan's might.

Halle, 1906

As his involvement with the revival movement grew, Eberhard's gifts as a leader were affirmed, and he was invited to lead bible studies, chair conferences, and hold public addresses in other cities. Along with such distinctions (he was "only" a student) came the temptation of pride, but also the honesty to acknowledge, fight, and ultimately reject it – which he did, as these poems make clear.

Begging the Lord to show'r us with blessings,
to let down his rain on the parched land below,
we came before him with confident prayers,
trusting in One who died and arose.

And blessings came, though not with the storm wind,
and hidden from those whose eyes cannot see;
and as we eagerly listened, we heard it:
a joyous song rising, glad and free.

Jubilant joy in redemption complete!
Joy in salvation and knowledge of grace!
Joy in recovery, long awaited!
Streams of joy on each uplifted face!

Brothers who'd wavered now finally dared,
though blind, to trust in God and his Word.
Grateful, again and again we took refuge
in Jesus Christ, our Savior and guard.

Finally, firm and decisive and ready
at last to obey God's call with deeds,
we cried out, victoriously, "Halt!" to the devil –
we'd fallen too often for his deceit.

Yes, God has sent us a shower of blessings.
To any who begs, he'll gladly send –
streams to refresh us when we are weary,
rivers that quietly flow without end.

Halle, at the end of the semester, September 1906

Father, grant to me the spirit
that penetrates my very soul
and drives it, as its surest guide,
in prayer to thee, my only goal.

Grant me the spirit that rejects
self-will, self-confidence, and pride.
Show me my deep guilt, for I
am naught but dead wood – withered, dry.

Grant me the spirit, Lord, that moves me
to kneel before thy holy face,
that points to my redeemer, Christ,
who judges all, but gives all grace.

Grant me the spirit that recoils
from recognition and renown,
that draws my every thought to Christ,
and bows in reverence at his throne.

Grant me the spirit, Lord, of fervor
that wrests the lost from death's dark night,
that rescues every one from pain
and brings them into thy pure light.

Grant me the spirit that endeavors
to praise thee alone with every breath,
and spreads forevermore thy realm,
and thy Son's triumph over death.

Halle, 1906

Remembering the Halle revival movement, and this poem in particular, Emmy writes in her memoirs that "we were filled with a deep love to Christ and used each free minute to grow deeper, to learn songs of an inner nature, and to testify to Christ. All of us felt an urgency to carry the message to

others, to bear witness to Christ. Our prayer meetings were a great source of strength. This song expresses...the spirit that swept through the country like a wind at that time."

Jesus

How long hast thou been calling me
to give my life entire to thee,
to sacrifice my ego
before thy altar finally!

And I have long resisted. But today
I plead: Lord, loose my bonds.
For I would come before thy face
and give myself into thy hands.

From this day on I will renounce
all selfish flabbiness, all lust;
with joy and gratefulness will dare
to cast myself upon thy breast.

All slackness, cowardice, and fear
I now reject and put to death.
From this moment, I must live
for God alone with every breath.

Every hour and every gift –
all that I am and all I own –
no longer can I count them mine,
for they belong to God alone.

And though the Enemy's fought long
to wrest this victory from me,
I know the cross has laid him low,
has robbed death's sting eternally.

For I have seen, without a doubt,
what on the cross the Lord can do:
he takes the trembling coward, gives him
strength and vigor, life anew.

Yes, I will trust, rejoicing
that his victories endure fore'er,
and firmly fix my eyes on him:
on Jesus Christ, my Savior sure.

Halle, 1906

Give me a heart, dear heavenly Father,
a heart that's free of all self-will,
a heart obedient to thy counsel,
that gladly thy commands fulfill.

Give me a heart prepared to practice
true self-denial at any time,
a heart that loves its enemies,
assured of glories yet to come.

Give me a heart of sympathy
for every person mired in sin,
that guides them toward the Father's land,
embraces them, and takes them in.

Give me a heart that hankers not
for worldly pleasures, selfish ends,
a heart that loves the poor, and so
forgets itself, a hand to lend.

Give me a heart that pays no heed
to threats or scorn or ridicule,
that keeps faith always with its God,
though blamed, despised, or called a fool.

A heart like thine, that lives for God –
would such a heart be given to me!
O Jesus, take me and all my gifts:
I'll find this heart alone in thee.

Halle, 1906

Father, grant to me the spirit
that penetrates my very soul
and drives it, as its surest guide,
in prayer to thee, my only goal.

Grant me the spirit that rejects
self-will, self-confidence, and pride.
Show me my deep guilt, for I
am naught but dead wood – withered, dry.

Grant me the spirit, Lord, that moves me
to kneel before thy holy face,
that points to my redeemer, Christ,
who judges all, but gives all grace.

Grant me the spirit that recoils
from recognition and renown,
that draws my every thought to Christ,
and bows in reverence at his throne.

Grant me the spirit, Lord, of fervor
that wrests the lost from death's dark night,
that rescues every one from pain
and brings them into thy pure light.

Grant me the spirit that endeavors
to praise thee alone with every breath,
and spreads forevermore thy realm,
and thy Son's triumph over death.

Halle, 1906

Completely thine! (Matt. 5:3–10)

Make us completely poor, O Jesus,
from wealth and riches set us free.
Yes, strip us bare of all our things,
that we have life alone in thee.

Make us completely earnest, Jesus,
and deepen us through pain and woe,
that we may feel the heavy weight
of the world's pain, where'er we go.

Make us completely good, O Jesus,
according to God's image above,
and good like thee, who, suffering
and dying, was yet filled with love.

Make us completely thirsty, Jesus.
Give us a hunger none can still.
Make thou our longing greater yet,
at all times but to will one will.

Let thy compassion and thy mercy
rule us entirely, all our days.
That we in love may serve the poor,
widen our hearts and souls through grace.

Make us completely clean, O Jesus,
thou, whose own heart is fully pure.
Make us entirely thine, we plead:
give us thyself, thy nature sure.

First published in a Baptist newspaper in September 1915, this poem was revised more than once by Eberhard. Though the first version was written in the first-person singular “me” throughout, he later introduced the plural “us.”

Make us completely firm, O Jesus,
though pain and death tear us apart.
Give us thy strength, that we endure,
that nothing can divide our hearts.

Completely penetrate and fill me
with trust in thy pure blood, O Lord,
and let each string within me sound
faith's deepest good in one great chord.

Halle, ca. 1906

From my soul's depths, I beg you, Lord:
give me the burning thirst that yearns
for nothing but the grace you give
to him who, trusting, toward you turns.

From my soul's depths, O let my prayer
with faith in your word and blood arise!
Lord, you who work great miracles:
let me stand firm before your eyes.

From my soul's depths, let me rejoice
and freely sing my praise to you –
yes, from its depths, to my king above,
who blesses me daily with grace anew.

Halle, ca. 1906

Lord and faithful shepherd, thou
who guid'st thy flock through every fray,
I know thou wilt always help me
conquer, as I did today.

Guide me, Lord, a weak disciple.
Take my hand, and hold it fast.
Lead me, that I may not stumble
but walk firmly in thy path.

Grant me, Lord, as thou didst Peter,
a spirit steady, firm and clear,
for I am but a weak fighter,
winning only when thou'rt near.

Let thy spirit down from heaven,
roaring, rushing over me!
When my flame begins to die,
rekindle it more powerfully.

Only thou canst set my heart
on fire and make it truly blaze.
Thou alone art life and breath:
to thee alone be thanks and praise.

Halle, ca. 1906

This year was one of richest grace,
that thou in love didst give to me.
On paths of light hast thou me led,
with deep joy filled me, set me free.

Accept me, Lord, take my whole life:
I give it thee in every part
without resistance or reserve.
Fill thou alone my mind and heart.

Lord, I was dearly bought by thee:
may no half-heartedness be mine.
Death's agony didst thou endure.
Now and eternally I'm thine.

O may I live, in this new year,
for thee alone, led by thy hand.
Save me from errant striving, Lord.
To serve thee purely, here I stand.

Thou only giv'st, to bear the strain
of daily toil, the strength I need.
Thou still'st the yearnings of my heart.
To live in thee is peace indeed.

Alone in thy strength can I face
the holy fight within the year,
and forward, never backward, look,
obey thy voice, and thy word hear.

Halle or Breslau, January 1, 1907

To Emmy

Beneath a shining moon
far out among the heather
I wandered all alone.

Where'er its beams broke through
the branches danced wild shadows
and patterns silver-hued.

For miles no single sound
except a lone owl calling –
then silence all around.

That night of nights the power
of love awoke within me:
I lost my heart that hour.

For her alone I yearned:
if she were only with me
and never from me turned!

Led on by longing's guise
I heard her very footsteps
and looked into her eyes.

What joy beyond compare,
to see her cherished features –
O might it stay fore'er!

The moon now cast its bright
white beams upon the birches –
a strange, bewitching sight.

O will she be my own?
To me, Lord, have you giv'n her?
And does she long for me?

The shadows disappeared.
The moon lit up the heather.
The land lay bright and clear.

She will be mine, I know!
My heart is overflowing –
how could it not be so?

Halle, March 1907

On March 26, 1907, after an evening Bible study, Eberhard took Emmy to her home, and they had their first “real talk” (they had met before but not exchanged more than a few words). Later Eberhard wrote to her, “After leaving you...in the moonlight, I prayed long and earnestly on my knees and received the certainty that you would become mine. I then went to a café on

Geist-Strasse and ate something, and then walked to the moor, where I experienced the most glorious night of my life, praying and thinking of you.” This is the night described in the poem above. Three days later, on Good Friday (March 29), having received permission from Emmy’s parents – though not his own – the couple was engaged.

To Emmy

'Twas only weeks ago that I
first laid my eyes on her –
and that she stole my heart,
although she never said a word.

How could I *not* remember her?
She hovered in my mind,
though I myself dared not to guess
if she the same would find.

I pondered how to find her,
wondered where her steps might wend.
O could I only win her –
just see her once again!

And it was not long after this
that all my dreams came true.
What happiness transfixed me!
Our eyes locked, and we knew...

It was when she placed in mine
her sweet and lovely hand,
that at last I dared to woo her,
her willing heart to find.

Then came, beneath the moonlight,
after deep and earnest prayers,
God's answer to my waiting heart:
"Rejoice, she will be yours."

Three days passed by, and quickly,
full of blessings for us both,
till, through the Lord, it happened:
we bound ourselves in troth.

And though we'd ask each other,
"Do you love me? Is it true?"
We knew it plainly, without words:
"Of course – and only you."

And so, no longer tarrying
to claim such happiness,
I asked her if she'd marry me,
and she gave to me her Yes.

And now – what jubilation,
what joy, what bliss, what glee!
For we have one another
now and eternally.

Halle, March 1907

On March 30 (Easter Saturday) Eberhard visited Emmy and her family and read them the two poems above. Later the same day he left for Breslau, where he planned to seek his parents' approval of his engagement.

To Emmy

Emmy, sweetest gift of love:
you are mine, and I am yours.
In the pureness of the Spirit,
we belong unto the Lord.

For him living, his remaining –
this is our inmost desire.
Trusting him, we lift our eyes
to meet the radiance of his fire.

In amazement we behold
the endless bounty of his grace.
We can fully trust his love,
for he has loved us all our days.

From his wealth, the Lord has showered
abundant joy on our full hearts,
and in answer to our prayers
he guides us to him, heavenwards.

It is Jesus Christ alone
who's given us our happiness.
He who banished all our sorrows
smiles with purest joy on us.

Jesus gave us fullest healing,
Jesus gave us perfect peace.
None has known such happiness
as Jesus has on us released.

Jesus is the only master
whom we'll serve from day to day.
Our hearts beat for him alone:
we're his forever, come what may.

Bound in loyalty to Jesus,
pledged to him, unbreakably,
I'm always yours; you, always mine –
because we love him endlessly.

Breslau, April 1–2, 1907

To Emmy

So often have we noted it –
how little the noblest words reveal.
The sweetest song on earth cannot
describe the deep love that we feel.

And yet, there is no need for speech,
because we know it without a word:
where'er we go, new joy – so great
we scarce can bear it – is assured.

Bright sunlight streams down over us –
the sunlight of God's love and grace
and boundless happiness and joy –
and every shadow is displaced.

Yes, happiness unbroken rules
in every heart that's in accord
with Christ: and so it is on earth
wherever he alone is Lord.

In Jesus Christ, our all and all,
it was that we first sought and found
each other; and in him our love
and unity is sealed and bound.

So we will gladly trace his path
as one, together, hand in hand,
and follow his steps faithfully,
our sure guide to a better land.

We'll swear no oath of loyalty:
with rock-like certainty we know
that we belong together fore'er,
that Christ's hand will ne'er let us go.

Breslau, April 7, 1907

Written on Easter Monday and Tuesday, the poem, "Emmy, sweetest gift" reflects Eberhard's exuberance over his engagement to Emmy. He wrote (April 1) "If only I could sit here with Emmy now and talk with her about our

wonderful happiness, about Jesus and total dedication to him!" On April 13 he returned to Halle, where he visited the von Hollanders for a week, and read them this and several other poems one evening at dinner.

After the farewell

I still cannot quite grasp it
that she had to depart.
How could I let it happen?
It tears my very heart!

Could I but only conquer
this storm of parting's pain!
Or can it not be vanquished –
weak worm that I remain?

No, I could ne'er be happy,
were Jesus not my star.
'Tis he gives us contentment,
though far apart we are.

So will I rest in Jesus,
my king. He'll fight for me –
his grace led us together,
he bears us mightily.

Yes, Jesus, this is fullness
of joy: to trust in thee,
for who believes is blissful
and shall thy glories see.

I know thou'lt lead her surely –
Emmy, my bride-to-be.
Thou knowest how completely
she trusts alone in thee.

So dearly do I love her –
much more than words can say.
With her I'm truly happy.
I shall be hers always.

She is my own, my dear one,
in thee, my God and Lord.
And yet – far may it echo –
I love thee even more!

The deeper my surrender
to thee, to be thine own –
the purer my heart's striving
to honor thee alone –

the more I am completely
her own in happiness.
For he who praises thee alone
shall see the heights of bliss.

In thee we are united:
we've made our vows on thee.
We're thine for life, each hour –
thine eternally!

Breslau, May 29, 1907

During the Whitsun holidays (May 19–29) Emmy stayed with Eberhard and his family in Breslau. Afterward, Eberhard wrote, "When you had gone, I sat at my desk for a long time, my face in my hands, and could hardly find my

way. But I received strength from our Lord." He wrote the poem above the same day. On May 30, having received it, Emmy replied, "It made me endlessly happy. I read it again and again, for I have just the same longing for you."

Struggle and victory

Around us in pitched battle
swirl the columns of Satan.
So stand alert, and pray until
the victory is taken.

Our captain is Christ Jesus –
he has never lost a war.
In him the weakest fighter
becomes a conqueror.

The world's deceitful powers
would seek to make us cower,
so keep your eyes on Jesus
despite their fiery glower.

We need not ever be anxious,
though driven without respite.
Hold on, believe in Jesus –
he'll never leave your side.

He calls us now: "Be comforted!
For though the storm still swirls,
through long hours of agony
I have overcome the world."

Take heart, for here is victory –
the cross on which Christ died.
He who was martyred for our sake
has crushed the devil's pride.

You, too, must drink the same cup
down to its bitterest dregs,
but know the Lord will comfort you:
his life will be your strength.

He'll gird you with his power,
all evil to overthrow,
and work in you the miracle
to win where'er you go.

Breslau, May 30, 1907

Remembering May–June 1907, Emmy writes in her memoirs that "after Whitsun, and my wonderful time in Breslau... the great fight against Else's conviction... began at home." The bone of contention was Else's announce-

ment on May 8 that she intended to receive baptism – an idea popular in the Halle revival but one bitterly opposed by the von Hollander parents, who were staunch Lutherans.

Still victorious

Sin grasps and holds the wavering heart.
Temptation looms and threatens all.
Satan inflames the smarting wound:
is life a trap – fall after fall?

From drear, dark depths awakes a sigh –
the gnawing fear of questioning doubt.
Can new life spring up here, be sown
where sin is still not rooted out?

My soul, what does the Father want?
This cannot be the life he means!
For how could any resist despair,
had he to wash his own soul clean?

No, Christ alone is the bread of life.
Cry out for joy: he is your light!
Not your death, but his on the cross
shall bear you upward to his heights.

Then up, and look with eyes of faith
and steadfast joy on him alone.
Take not another backward glance
from Jesus, your life's cornerstone.

Within us all is dark and void –
his strength alone should be adored.
Whom Jesus frees is truly freed –
empty of self, strong in the Lord.

Breslau, June 16, 1907

In the letter that enclosed the poem above, Eberhard told Emmy, "I think you brood too much and look much too much into yourself. Today's poem will tell you what I mean...Nothing but looking toward Jesus can give deliverance and certainty. Clearly we must put up a fight against every sinful impulse, and we cannot do this earnestly enough. But, my little dove, we must not remain downcast...Always joyful and happy – that is how I want you to be! There are so few Christians who are like that. Though reborn, they do not understand the victory of looking toward Christ, but keep gazing within."

Pure service

Lord, I beg thee from my heart –
hear and heed this single plea:
let every step of faith I venture
count alone as honor to thee.

I've seen what great deeds thou canst work
through me and anyone who trusts.
Whole fields stand ready for thy harvest –
fields the Foe has surely lost.

But grant me, Lord, a purer blessing:
let the self be put to death.
May every child of thine give praise
to thee alone with every breath.

Grant me, Lord, this one request:
guard me from any hint of fame.
Poor as it is, my life is thine
and ought to glorify thy name.

Destroy the sin of men who'd steal
the honor that belongs to thee.
Let no one dare to praise another
who simply listened – and believed.

Lord, show me with thy clarity
how poor all men are in thy sight,
and how success so quickly leads them
far away from truth and light.

Stamp out all human praise, and show
the fullness of thy majesty.
Reveal thy Spirit with such power
that all who honor men must flee.

Breslau, June 21, 1907

In a letter he sent Emmy with "Pure service," Eberhard wrote, "I find praise harder to take than blame and misunderstanding, because it is tempting. I give thanks for being slighted and misunderstood...because it is good for me to be humbled."

Love and truth

The world is full of lies –
there's poison in each cup of joy.
In following the current,
the strongest use dishonest ploys.

There's endless talk of love,
but few have truly felt its touch.
Falsehood lurks in each of us –
we cover, hide, and mask so much.

Yes, God alone is truth,
and all is open to his sight.
His followers seek clarity
and hate what's hidden from the light.

His love alone's untainted,
free from every kind of lie –
an impulse, pure and holy:
sincere and honest, without guise.

So is our love, dear Emmy.
Between us all is clear and plain.
All shyness now has vanished.
Love, and love alone, remains.

In this we are both blissful:
that we share every joy and grief.
Yes, we'll be happy always –
no fight we face will be too fierce.

We'll carry every burden,
however hard it is to bear,
and tell each other everything,
thus banishing each lingering care.

So will love's joys and blessings
increase for us a thousand fold,
and both of us shall share
in boundless happiness untold.

Breslau, July 9, 1907

After telling Emmy in a letter (July 7) how hard he had found it to be open with her about his past, he added, "Yet I am terribly glad I did it, for I am so free and happy now! I will always tell you everything of any importance...even if it is very hard for both of us. There is no need for us to burden each other with minor difficulties that are quickly resolved. But I ex-

pect to know absolutely everything about my fiancée that is a burden for her, and she should be able to expect the same of me." Replying the next day, Emmy agreed: "I find it absolutely necessary, as you do, that we tell each other everything. I think it is a disgrace when an engaged couple lie to each other, as happens so often."

Jesus everywhere!

The love of Jesus goes with us
where'er we may be going,
The Savior stands beside us,
his loving mercy showing.

In victory after victory,
he gives us his full powers.
He blessings bring new energy.
Defeat is never ours.

His peace is there for everyone –
for all those who believe.
Yes, Jesus is our source of joy,
leads us to fields of peace.

Christ Jesus is our very life
no matter where we are,
so let us raise our hearts to him
and shout his praise afar!

The Christian's life is always
a victorious, joyful race.
So come, ye throngs, to Jesus,
and give him all your praise.

Breslau, July 11, 1907

Eberhard wrote “Jesus everywhere!” for Emmy on the eve of her move to Salzwedel, a parish where she was to take up quarters with a pastor's family as a nurse for the children. In the letter he sent with the poem, Eberhard writes, “May God bless you in Salzwedel! I rejoice that the Lord wants to use you as a blessing to all...from the old lady to the little children to Herr Pastor. I have always found that the more joyfully and naturally, the more freely and simply we go on our way – if we are serious about giving over all we are and have to Jesus – the more certain and glorious the victory will be!”

Death and salvation

Ruled by murky powers of gloom,
whole peoples languish, deep in night,
bound by dread and dark deceit –
held by an abysmal might.

The curse of humankind is sin;
its final blow, the sting of death
that poisons every man or child
who breathes its pestilential breath.

With grasping, cruel, and fearsome power
sin holds dominion o'er each sense.
It robs the strongest of their vigor
and leaves them to stumble, blind and dense.

O when we meet such souls, and see
the mortal anguish of their state,
must we not beg God fervently
that Jesus save them from certain fate?

From deep within we feel compelled
to rescue every wavering soul –
with joy help break the devil's chains,
through Christ, who came to make us whole.

Then up, to conquer night and death!
Bright burning brand, flare ever higher!
Sin's grief and pain are broken now –
no evil can withstand Christ's fire.

Breslau, July 12, 1907

Explaining the impetus for “Death and salvation” – an unpleasant family scene with his parents, who were increasingly exasperated about his growing disregard for convention and his continued questioning of such practices as infant baptism –Eberhard wrote to Emmy (July 14) that it had given him “a shattering glimpse into people's servitude to sin...I must designate sin as sin and have nothing to do with it. And I must talk with Mama about her soul. Oh, that she might be saved!”

Pure joy

Peace and joy and jubilation
flood through us from Jesus Christ,
whirling streams of glad elation –
peace laughs loud on every side.

Sing exulting, my beloved,
radiate your joy to all.
Joy – pure joy – is what Christ offers:
all our sorrows are no more.

Share your happiness with others,
pass it on to everyone.
You, my cheerful, beaming sunshine –
send your rays to all who come.

Soon I shall again be gazing
deep into your lovely eyes.
Soon I shall once more be with you –
greater joy could not be mine.

Only days keep us apart now,
my life's deepest joy and bliss –
then you'll walk along beside me
and return my every kiss.

All our lives let us be joyful,
radiant, happy in the Lord.
Jesus promises his blessings –
peace is ours forevermore.

Breslau, July 14, 1907

Strained relations at home (see previous note) only heightened Eberhard's love for Emmy, as the poem "Pure joy" shows. He sent it to her immediately after writing it, "with deep joy in my heart."

Rejoice and sing,
dearest heart!
Leap with joy,
let sorrow part!

I'll see you soon
again at last,
kiss you happily,
hold you fast.

Child of peace,
of bright sunshine,
of joy and bliss –
you are mine!

Breslau, July 21, 1907

I'm coming at top speed
on a lurching stampede
toward our next kiss –
but I'll still send you this.

August 3 or 4, 1907

Writing on July 21, and enclosing the poem, "Rejoice and sing," Eberhard told Emmy that "at this moment I have only one wish: that you are just as happy as I am." Later in the same letter he rejoices at the thought of meeting her in two weeks' time: "What happy, glorious hours those will be!" So, apparently, were the hours he spent on the train getting there – see the quatrain above, which he wrote on the back of a postcard.

Follow the Lamb!

Follow the Lamb! My sweetest Emmy,
never again shall we know fear.
His way shall lead us onward surely,
e'en though the furious foe is near.

Follow the Lamb! How deep our oneness
when we trust in him alone
and follow faithfully his pureness,
eternally to be his own!

Follow the Lamb! How powerfully
he guides us on at every step!
Through deepest pain, through greatest effort
we are carried by his strength.

Follow the Lamb! How deep the joy
of going his way hand in hand,
in exultation as in sorrow
faithful at his side we stand.

Follow the Lamb! How sweet our peace
when we rest in him, serene and still,
in word and song forever praising
him, and living by his will!

Follow the Lamb! How blest our hope
in the dawn of that all-glorious Day!
What oppressed us has now vanished –
forevermore we'll sing his praise!

Breslau, September 4, 1907

In the letter he sent with this poem, Eberhard informs Emmy that he has reached “a serious, momentous decision that will have grave consequences and give our life a sharply defined direction, fraught with suffering.” After grappling with the question of baptism for four months, he now felt that “scripture recognizes only one baptism, the baptism of those who have become believers. I therefore regard myself as unbaptized and hereby declare

war on the existing church systems...It is, of course, my wish to be baptized as soon as possible and to leave the established church.” In 1970, for the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Bruderhof, Marlys Swinger set the poem to music; it was first sung at a joint brotherhood conference at Woodcrest in June of that year.

To battle!

God in holy love has built
a faithful church, his very own,
and chosen her, a cherished bride –
set apart as his alone.

Satan, prince of lies, has sought
to turn this work into his gain,
to mix with evil and distort
what is solely God's domain.

Yet the truth can not be murdered.
Faith is still alive in us.
The church shall be God's own forever,
purity shall rule his house.

Rise up, fighters for God's spirit!
Nevermore give way to lies.
Press on forward, do not falter,
though the Foe in fury flies.

Pray for eyes to see the truth.
May all lies be stripped of force.
May God's word give clarity
and make us one – poured from one source.

The word of God brings sharp discernment.
By faith alone can God be known,
and faith alone reveals his leading.
Without his seed, naught can be grown.

Bend your knees no more to idols,
stop all worship of false gods.
Let no one be misled to turn
for help from profiteers of fraud.

Join the fight against all falsehood –
Satan's cunning guise of light –
until truth shall fully conquer,
and the Lord appear in might.

Rise and fight in perfect union.
Cast away all that divides.
Nothing can tear down the church:
its radiant purity e'er abides.

Breslau, September 15, 1907

Reflecting on his vision of a true church, and his determination to fight against worldly distortions, Eberhard indicated to Emmy (September 16) that he was especially taken with the ideal described in 1 Cor. 1:2, 2 Cor. 1:1, and

Gal. 1:2. He enclosed the poem, "To battle!" as an expression of his thoughts on the matter. Marianne Zimmermann set it to music at the Alm Bruderhof in March 1936, for Heini and Annemarie's wedding, when, she says, "it acquired special meaning for us."

Out of weakness, strength

Lord, thou hast shown me once again
my poverty and powerlessness.
For this I praise thy saving blood.
Accept me in my wretchedness.

Lord, thou hast shattered once again
all confidence in my own strength.
No more shall I rely on it –
it only brings regret at length.

Jesus, princely conqueror,
help me trust alone in thee,
who leadeth every fight I enter
to triumphant victory.

So will I stride ahead, exulting,
eternal victory to gain.
I know that thou wilt firmly guide me.
Where thou art, is no more pain.

Breslau, September 17, 1907

Our mainstay

Human props must fall away:
Savior, we need thee alone.
Worlds may break, but thou wilt stay.

Though the darkness may increase,
thou, O Lord, art our true light.
On us, thy children, rests thy peace.

Pain and sorrow weigh on us,
yet we know that thou canst heal.
Thus in thee alone we trust.

Thee we follow, free of haste.
Thy quiet calm remains our help,
Golgotha, our heart's true rest.

Jesus, thou art at our side.
Thou hast cast our burdens far,
Satan's might forever defied.

Thou didst say, "Rejoice, take heart.
All who suffer for my sake
in my kingdom shall take part."

Christ, we would thy followers be,
rich in joy that comes from thee,
thine for all eternity.

Breslau, September 19, 1907

On September 18, Eberhard received a letter from Emmy's father in response to their recent decision to be re-baptized. Passing on news of its arrival to Emmy the same day, he told her that though her father had assured him that their personal relationship would remain unchanged, he had also

stipulated the following: there would be no wedding until Eberhard had completed his first state examination in theology; the couple could correspond "only twice a week"; Emmy would have to wait one year before being re-baptized; and all visits were off for one year.

How could the gloom have yielded?

Where has the darkness fled?
From whence this heavenly brightness
among the shadows shed?

My heart was bare of gladness
and blinded by my plight –
weighed down by pain and suffering –
I saw no hope in sight,

until a harsh beam struck and lit
my wounded soul within –
and a voice spoke, telling me,
“Your grief is close to sin.

“Christ does not will that anguish
bind you to darkness grim.
He calls you to redemption –
to find your light in him.”

'Twas then I bowed before him,
my shame and guilt to face,
and then that he received me
with the bounty of his grace.

'Tis Jesus, the strong Savior,
who breaks the clouds of night.
To find him is to live –
to see him, wondrous might.

In spite of every sorrow
he'll shine upon my face.
Both you and I shall radiate
the fullness of his grace.

And so let us together
on Jesus set our sights
and joyously go forward,
his eyes our guiding light.

Breslau, October 30, 1907

Sickness and healing

You thought yourself secure and safe,
and yet it still crept slowly in,
enveloping your very soul:
the pestilential fog of sin.

Through cracks too thin to let in light
its hellish fumes seeped bit by bit,
and thus it overwhelmed you
before you even noticed it.

Deeper and deeper you sank down –
your heavy heart, the prey of sin.
In vain, the shepherd's warning cry –
your ear, once sharp, was deaf to him.

Where will your helpless heart turn now?
The spell that holds you in its clasp
has brought your captive soul so low,
you're sure you're in the devil's grasp.

But there's still time to rouse yourself,
the Lord himself is on your side.
Come, run to him on eager feet,
and think how on the cross he died.

Yes, sin on sin has weighed you down
and crushed your weak and weary will,
but there's no end to Jesus' grace,
and he'll accept your burdens still.

At Golgotha, beneath the cross,
there's hope for every desperate soul.
It is for *you* that he hangs there,
to heal you is his only goal.

At the beginning of the letter he sent with "For Jesus alone!" Eberhard writes to Emmy, "From this poem you can see that I am very happy...happy

Here are no horrors, here no plagues,
only salvation, only light.
So look to Christ himself and stay
eternally within his sight.

I praise thee, Lord, a thousand times,
yes, none but thee alone!
For at the cross, though Satan rage,
I will forever be your own.

Breslau, January 31, 1908

For Jesus alone!
So may I live
with all I have
and nothing less.
I'll give him all,
my Lord and King –
so will my heart
find happiness.

Breslau, April 8, 1908

Then forward, upward! and forget
all that held you back, unfree.
Onward with Jesus, deeply cleansed,
always more faithfully!

Breslau, April 12, 1908

because I am allowed to belong to Jesus through a new purification. It is so important to find, again and again, the points where a new surrender [to God] is necessary. Otherwise the Enemy will easily succeed...Everything, really everything, depends on our belonging to the Lord so completely that the last remnant of self and the least trace of evil is overcome for good."

Yours one year

Twelve most eventful months have passed –
one whole year come and gone –
since you, my dearest, stole my heart,
since I became your own.

It was a year of grace as well –
of struggle, pleasure, pain –
of following life's narrow path,
eternity to gain.

It opened with such rapture
on the heath, beneath the moon.
Today the sun is shining –
love's bliss was mine so soon!

How deep, how high, my hopes and pleas!
How earnestly I prayed,
while moonbeams bathed me with their light
and night winds round me played.

My vision then was far too small,
too little did I dare.
Yet God gave me a hundred times
what I begged him in prayer.

And now, see with what happiness
my dearest Emmy beams!
Of such bright radiance and joy
most hearts can only dream.

The gift that she, my dearest,
allowed me to receive,
I could not, in my boldest hours,
ever have conceived.

For she increased my joy
at least a millionfold; yes, more
than one could ever hope for here
or on earth's farthest shore.

Yes, she has given me more
than any other under heaven:
she gave her life to me entire,
and more cannot be given.

O Emmy! Let my love for you
wash o'er you as a flood,
that every passionate impulse,
my every drop of blood

be yours alone entirely,
yours always to abide.
No force of exile, threat of death
could drive me from your side.

May I, to serve you all our days,
my burning love employ,
and never tire to devise
whatever brings you joy.

So let my life be wholly yours,
my sunshine and my bride!
Let any search: no fairer love
on earth will e'er be spied.

Breslau, April 14, 1908

Eberhard wrote this poem to mark the first anniversary of their engagement. In the accompanying letter (April 15) he writes: "Preparing for exams has kept me from prayer...and from writing poems. But yesterday I couldn't resist any longer –I just had to write the enclosed lines. I then went out into the park, in bright moonlight, to pray and to praise God."

The path lies straight and shining:
our cause is the call of God!
We follow Jesus onward,
our bond with him renewing.

The Son of God is bringing
his peace, as promised long.
We follow Jesus onward
with cheerful, hopeful singing.

And should our path forever
be sunlit till the end –
we follow Jesus onward,
forsaking Jesus never.

Come need and suffering ever,
or death, or bitter shame,
we follow Jesus onward –
no power can us sever.

And though the Murderer's wrath
has broken many a breach,
we follow Jesus onward,
a blood-drenched bridge our path.

Night will soon be defeated –
the great day is drawing nigh!
We'll follow Jesus onward
until our goal is completed.

Eberhard & Emmy, 24–25 September, 1908

To my only love

We know it without even speaking,
nor is there any need to say
that it is love alone that binds us.
Together we belong for aye.

Love is the happiness of living –
love is the radiance of the sun.
We need not seek it, for it freely flows,
into our hearts unbidden runs.

In love our hearts shall beat together.
In love we are forever one.
Through love, all pain is sweetened for us.
Through love, my life becomes your own.

Breslau, September 28, 1908

The summer and fall of 1908 were tumultuous for both Eberhard and Emmy. Else's baptism on August 2 was still making waves in the household, Emmy was unwell, and there was no end of strife between the young couple and their parents. On September 22, Eberhard received word from the Silesian State Council that, because of his obstinacy with regard to baptism, he would not be permitted to take his doctoral examinations in theology. The next day, in an all-out family quarrel, Emmy's father accused Eberhard of being "unreliable and morally dubious," and attempted to cancel the young couple's engagement. Emmy dug in her heels and was turned out of the house (she found refuge with friends in Berlin). Eberhard left of his own accord; it would be more than a year before he entered the von Hollander residence again. Eberhard was baptized on October 25, 1908, and was subsequently disowned by his parents. Emmy was baptized on December 22. In the spring of 1909 he moved to Erlangen and began working toward a doctorate in philosophy. Re: "The path lies straight and shining," Emmy wrote four of the verses in Halle on September 24; Eberhard added several more the next day, in Breslau. He reworked it into this version in 1935.

Roses

So beautiful and fragrant that
no other flower could compete,
these roses fill my mind with thoughts
of you – so distant, yet so sweet.

Whispering, they nod together,
friendly foliage entwined,
as if they intend to mirror
what is foremost in my mind.

Rising up from leafy bower,
offering their greeting fair,
slender, clambering, budding sprays –
enchancing as your hair.

Bound together by your love,
sent by you as greeting fond –
and it was only hours ago
that you held them in your hand.

You chose each one with me in mind,
a token of our love, I know,
and what was beating in your heart
these flowers tell me now:

One rose is red, and red your lips.
Red is true love's very hue.
Red is the blood that in me throbs
through every single vein for you.

Another, a sweet and tender bud
freely unfolding to perfect flower,
is untouched, like my own dear love –
a rose no wind or rain can mar.

Its delicate petals draw apart,
like wings outspreading, wide and free,
and like this blossom, she bares her heart,
reveals her childlike soul to me.

This rose, here, is smooth as satin,
in deep-hued crimson richly dressed,
but even it could never match
the fairness with which you are blest.

And while its clustered petals gleam
in dusky, jeweled splendor rare,
I see, above, another brightness
whose radiance is beyond compare.

I'm thinking of two stars I know,
sky-blue, lively, loving, clear:
your eyes, and brimming from them both
a shining pearl – a glistening tear.

How sweet, when my own darling weeps
o'er me, her best beloved, a tear,
and I press her head close to mine –
though far apart, in love we're near.

There's one more rose that far excels
all other flowers, for its gleam
reflects the light of God's great love,
which shines on us with radiant beam.

Take my word, dear Emmy!
The hour's no longer far away
when you, my heart's own sun and star,
forever at my side shall stay.

Breslau, September 29, 1908

After Emmy sent him a bouquet of roses, Eberhard wrote, "How shall I thank you! I believe this poem will tell you more than a letter could. It seems as if my love for you were growing ever deeper, nobler, happier, and more trusting..."

Always green

As these lovely flowers growing
in a peaceful forest glade,
so the joy that comes from Jesus
to our hearts shall never fade.

Since it firmly rests on Jesus
and on God, who blesses us,
our love is like the periwinkle:
always green, for faithfulness.

I am yours, you're mine forever –
what delight, what endless bliss!
What a sun-filled life is ours –
as this flower of happiness!

Erlangen, May 15, 1909

Freewillingly forward! Give ear to the cry
of distress and world-wide corruption.
See how, by the thousands, men perish and die,
despairing and doomed to destruction.

Freewillingly forward! Into the strife
'neath our banner – the cross, of the Savior.
Happy is he who gives Jesus his life.
Christ's crown will be his forever.

July 15, 1909

Tell me who bestowed on us
the gift of love through all these years,
who o'ershadowed them all with grace
in joyous times, and times of tears.

Ask who it is, who gives us strength
to carry on, gives life and breath;
who is the heart's true resting place –
'tis he who loved us unto death.

Ask who it is, who is the sun
of our love's joy, whose radiance pours
its blessings on our hearts' desire –
it is our Savior, Christ the Lord.

It is the Lord who stands beside us!
He goes with us wherever we go!

March 29, 1917

On May 15, Eberhard wrote to Emmy from Erlangen, where he was writing his dissertation on Nietzsche, "This morning I got up at five o'clock and went for a wonderful hike to the Atzelsberg, where I picked a bouquet of periwinkles for you."

Dedicated to "my best beloved little blackbird, on the tenth anniversary of our engagement," Eberhard wrote the poem "Tell me" in the Harz Mountains, where he and Emmy were on a rare vacation, taking stock of the previous decade and seeking clarity about their goals for the future.

Light, redeem! O save and free us.
Let thy beams pierce us to the core.
Consecrate all things, King Jesus,
thou rising sun, thou morning star.

Lord, we fully trust thy radiance.
Thy summons calls us out of night.
Brilliant light-worlds dost thou build
of fires baptismal, pure and bright.

Built on shining, radiant pillars,
thy sacred temple soon will stand.
Roar, O spirit of fire, roar loudly –
send out thy flames across the land!

Holy power, draw near and heal us:
alone in pureness can life shine.
Leave us not, O Holy Spirit –
a pure white stone thy sacred sign.

Sannerz, 1921

We believe the unseen being.
We believe the final power.
We believe what is revealed.
We believe hour by hour.

We believe the quiet glimmer.
We believe the inner word.
We believe, although in darkness.
We believe here on earth.

We believe the words of Jesus.
We believe the Spirit's might.
Faith brings forth a new creation.
Open wide, O gates of life!

Sannerz, 1921

The last line of “Light redeem!” refers to Revelation 2:17, “To him who is victorious I will give the hidden manna; I will give him also a white stone, and on the stone will be written a new name, known to none but him that receives it.”

For our children

See how the bee-people swarm together –
what perfect oneness they display!
They build and serve and work as one.
With “mine” and “thine” they do away.

When they return to nurse their young,
then, too, they are completely one.
They share the harvest of each blossom,
and none lives for himself alone.

Bees know the impulse of true oneness –
a wondrous sign of community.
A people of love, they toil as one,
and none is left out of their unity.

Sannerz, 1921

Sannerz Christmas

Christmas! Holy night of nights
that made the very Richest poor –
you pierce the darkness with your light;
powers of night cannot endure.

Jesus is the light of stars.
Jesus is the strength of life!
And he does for the world’s poor,
things beyond the world’s belief.

Make us poor through your great love,
Jesus, poor like you, we plead.
Make us weak – weak in your strength.
Show us mercy in our need.

Sannerz, 1921

Written for a children’s songbook, this poem reflects Eberhard’s lifelong fascination with the natural world, and his insistence that nature study be part of every child’s education, so that each might grasp “the coherence of nature and of mankind, and the unity and communal character of all forms of life.”

Newly revealed, the Word
shines out its truth on us
as we view with prayerful awe
the Spirit's new-built house.

Newly wakened to the truth,
we listen to God's call,
as step by step he leads us
on the way he longs for all.

Newly opened, the way ahead
to the kingdom of God is clear.
His mission takes on power –
the Mighty One is here.

Sannerz, ca. 1921

Over 2,500 visitors inundated Sannerz in 1921, and many of them sought Eberhard's advice. Counseling the confused, encouraging the weary, and diffusing interpersonal tensions, he must have worn himself to the bone at times. But as the poem "The will is a power" indicates, he never doubted that life's deepest questions could be answered by every person who truly sought God's will.

The will is a power.
In the spirit, it calls
you forth and gives
shape and form to all.

God's will is plain:
he seeks readiness –
so let your will answer.
Let your no become yes.

When all feeling is gone
and all counsel fails,
then faith becomes action –
a goal fills its sails.

Night swallows what's old
when faith catches fire.
The will reawakes,
sparks leap ever higher.

What's withered burns up
and self-will dies.
Whom God claims as his,
in him faith will arise.

Faith's entered in –
true conversion is here.
Now the will is pure
and active and clear.

God is this will,
and he gives from above
new life, where all
was dead, and new love.

Sannerz, ca. 1921

We believe. May deeds now follow,
deeds that faith in you demands.
May the truth of your great vision
grip us, heart and head and hand.

Love accomplishes your will.
We rebel; your will remains.
You chasten everyone you seek,
yet we resist your judgment's pain.

Deep in our hearts we long for you.
We love you in death's sore distress.
We yearn to feel just as you feel.
Where'er you lead, we will say yes.

We want to live for you alone.
We want to do as you direct –
in you, our selfish will to silence,
whatever grieves you to reject.

What you require of us, you give!
All that you promise, you fulfill!
The radiance of your sun is love,
and strength to live, your holy will.

Sannerz, ca. 1921

'Tis true at last:
the Lord is mine.
Ruler of all,
I am now thine.

The Lord of light
art thou alone.
I am nothing –
my life is thy own.

Sannerz, 1921–22

In fetters of need,
in fetters of lust,
in fetters of fraud,
in fetters of war.

The world is in chains,
enslaved by greed
and covered in muck –
in fetters of need.

Bodies are shackled,
and women are thrust
into bondage – entangled
in fetters of lust.

Under mountains of lies
our work is stalled –
by the weight of deceit,
by the fetters of fraud.

The battle is stalled
in the grudges of yore,
in decay and defeat –
in the fetters of war.

Fleestedt, 1921 or 1922

Eberhard's frequent public speaking tours took him to Munich, Dresden, Frankfurt, Berlin, and other large cities, where he found a "great longing for something new," but also the "unmistakable bondage to evil" that he describes in the poem, "In fetters of need." Note, in the last verse, an allusion to the resentment that millions of Germans felt over their "shameful" defeat in 1918, and over the humiliating war compensations demanded by the Allies.

Powers collapse, strength drains away.
Time breaks down.
Sight fails, the years race quickly by.
World judgment sounds.

Masses die, whole peoples perish.
Day is gone.
Earth's ravaged, worlds are overturned.
The horror's come.

Towers rock, walls crumble, fall.
Brute force subsides.
Stars appear, and hearts give thanks.
The kingdom's nigh!

God's approach, Christ's coming,
the age divine – now here –
is tangible as seers saw it:
as reality.

Sannerz, 1922

May peace awaken,
and earth be overtaken
by God's kingdom.
And may all aching hearts
freed from hatred's dread smart,
yet become brothers.
Hear me, both friend or foe,
I implore you to know
and heed this watchword:
in Jesus' purity,
there is our friendship
and our unity.

Sannerz, 1922

Thou, thou spirit of Christ,
whatever has been, I trust in thee.

Thou, thou risen one,
art ever here: I see thee.

Thou, thou! What am I?
Whatever I've been, I rest in thee!

Thou, thou power of the world,
thou givest life: I give thee mine.

Thou, thou rememberest those
who turned on thee. I love thee.

Thou, thou coming one:
thy kingdom comes. I wait for thee.

Sannerz, 1922

1922 began with growing tensions at Sannerz. By summer, things came to a head, and some forty members abandoned the household. Devastating as this crisis was, Eberhard refused to engage in mud-slinging or concede defeat. He chose instead to use the exodus as a chance to re-found the community on its original center, Christ.

Written after the painful Sannerz crisis, "Thou, thou" was set to music two years later by Alexander Weichert, an old family friend. Eberhard's son Heinrich regarded it as one of his father's deepest poems and said that, along with "Jesus: thou," which Weichert also set to music (p.54) it should not be over-used, but sung "only at holy moments."

Toward the sunrise

Twilight falls, hope flees the heart.
Temples collapse, things fall apart
as day departs.

Poisons black, embers red,
yellow rage – lights mist and fade:
dusk's brewing shade.

Sultry, brooding storm clouds break.
Dark powers hurl forked lightning, shake
the night awake.

Passions, staggering drunkenness.
Chains, whips, stubborn mindlessness.
Night's heavy breath.

Gloomy struggles, fights unrestrained.
Broken hearts, limbs cramped, constrained –
no end of pain.

Vacant glitter, void grotesque.
Strife, envy, toxic heaviness –
the Snake's bequest.

Misunderstandings, venoms stirred.
Quarreling brothers, confusion of words –
minds are blurred.

Hardened souls and bitter fears,
prayers sent upward with fierce tears.
Morning nears.

Now hope glimmers through the dark.
A faint beam meets us from afar:
the morning star,

while o'er the chaos of the night,
burns with judging, saving light
the sunshine bright.

Illusions lift and disappear –
gone at last all bonds, all fear:
dawn breaks here.

Oars swing in rhythm, ripples gleam.
'Neath flower garlands, faces beam
as sunlight streams.

Peace smiles, and before our eyes,
truth unites, joy purifies:
God's day draws nigh.

Poisons yield like falling chains.
Joy abounds, free and unfeigned.
The Lord now reigns.

Sannerz, spring 1923

How Eberhard weathered the 1922 crisis on a personal level might best be guessed from this poem, according to his biographer, Markus Baum: "Eberhard was no superhero. The breakup of his community sapped his strength...For months, he fought attacks of self-doubt and depression. In his poem 'Toward the sunrise' he describes the quarreling, poison, strife, and

envy he experienced. But in the eighth verse, he unexpectedly announces, 'Morning nears.' It is a symbolic sunrise: truth breaks in; love is victorious. And by the poem's end, he is stating emphatically, 'The Lord now reigns.' It was this certainty that kept him from falling into self-destructive brooding – a rock-like certainty that always won the day."

Silent devotions.
From treetops tall
soft twitters resound,
but not one call.

We wait, listen –
a tiny band.
Soft winds murmur
all around.

Let God speak now.
Let us be still.
All else must shatter
as he wills.

The Spirit shall build
a holy dwelling.
Trust in his great
stream upwelling.

In thee we're strong,
freed from old ways.
Thou alone rulest
here, today.

The Holy Spirit
reigns here free –
awakens, renews
eternally.

Benneckenstein, April 1923

Eberhard wrote this poem, 'Silent devotions' at a youth conference in the Harz Mountains. Regarding its theme, Emmy writes in her memoirs, "All of us sensed that, hidden in nature, lay a mystery. Many had never experienced God or had lost sight of him through disillusionment with the established churches...Out in nature, however, people sensed something...of the unknown God, and had great reverence for him.

I have begun to live again.
The night retreats, death sinks away.
My body stirs, my limbs awake.
Spring breezes whisper, sunbeams play.

Refrain:

Who grasps the lightning in his hand?
Who holds the sun and makes it blaze?
To see is to tremble in awe and bliss
and know hope's blessings all your days.

I've started to believe again.
My courage rises, my spirit revives.
I walk as if through rose-filled arbors.
Life spreads and stretches, upward strives.

And I've begun to love again.
Spring's fragrance wafts upon the air.
Death's coldness is at last dispersed,
the loveless night chased to its lair.

Sannerz, May 1923

Written the first spring after the Sannerz crisis, "I have begun to live again" reflects Eberhard's new joy after what must have been one of the hardest winters of his life. Walther Böhme, a friend, set it to music in 1924.

Out of the silence,
alone in the dawn,
bright sparks come together,
in gladness now join.

Hearts are opened,
and circles closed.
Men find one another:
a new wind blows.

Dancing and swaying,
hands join the round.
All life is renewed –
glad music resounds.

Heart meets heart
with purity crowned.
In unity radiant
garlands are bound.

Sannerz, May 1923

The valley opens wide,
and sunshine floods it full of light.
O may my soul awake to thee,
to thee be opened wide –
that I for thee may be outpoured
and wait in stillness for thy word.

My eyes, be lifted high
to view creation's wondrous might,
to gaze far out across the land –
yea, thou art great! not I.
Thou, only one, art all in all.
In thee there is no other call.

No other choice is mine.
Eternity rules in the spheres.
Its radiance forever streams,
and it is not confined,
but everywhere. All space is thine –
and so I give thee all that's mine.

As boundless and as wide
as is this land, so is our God.
His spirit plays across the fields;
in all that lives, he hides.
He hovers o'er the woodland trees –
a moving, pulsing, living breeze.

This wide and lovely scene's
a symbol of God's reign of peace.
Its colors are our colors –
for our hope is always green,
and with the depth of waters blue,
we would be loyal to thee, and true.

God, thou art without end!
To thee the widest land is small.
Thy spirit knows no bounds;
so, too, we love thee without end.
Yes, we are wholly, fully thine:
none stands apart, in space or time.

Sannerz, May 1923

From Emmy's memoirs: "Early morning meetings at Sannerz had a deep meaning for us... Anyone who was at peace with God and his brothers and sisters could take part; those who were not stayed away. At six o'clock we gathered around the kitchen fire... in silence, listening, a powerful spirit of expectation living in us. It seemed the kingdom could break in any day! After this we went to work – in the office, in the garden, in the children's room, and elsewhere around the house."

Set to music by Alexander Weichert the same year it was written, "The valley opens wide" was often sung at Sannerz and (later) the Rhön Bruderhof. Marianne Zimmermann writes: "I will never forget those meetings on the Küppel – the hill behind our house – with the vast countryside lying open before us. The view certainly helped broaden our inner horizon."

The heavens are opening
like floodgates – it pours.
The turmoil of tempests
has torn down the doors.

Now gates are unlocking
and opening wide.
Do you see it? Believe:
the Spirit will guide.

In the humblest homes,
where nobody cared,
at last men are open,
to pray, and to dare.

As hearts are opened,
new circles are bound.
Souls find one another
on holy ground.

Sannerz, May 1923

In rhythmic joy we dance and swing,
and heart to heart, the echoes ring:
for pure love lives.

Sparks of joy,
at first alone
and sunk in silence,
soon unite
and flare as one.

Such a gathering cannot end,
for we must find each other again.
Daylight reigns!

Sannerz, 1923

In a letter to a close friend, Eberhard writes (January 30, 1923) “Now is the moment to reclaim the truth everywhere! In speech, in song, and through the printed word, above all in work and life...one message must be spread near and far: Jesus. Again and again, everything that people cling to must be shattered...so that through dying, they may find resurrection...renewed faith in Christ...courage for discipleship ...and the ever-new victory of the coming kingdom of God.”

From Emmy’s memoirs: “We used to talk together until the early hours of the morning. Many times our discussions became quite heated, but we were usually able to end on a harmonious note. Often we would end with a quiet dance, moving in a circle as we sang.”

God moves

I must cease. As need and suffering grow,
God takes on guilt, down into death must go,
for us becomes a sacrifice,
through blood and shame us purifies.

I am death. God lives and moves and works.
His surging pow'r, tight strung, as lightning forks
and spans the skies in cosmic arcs
of dancing flames and glowing sparks.

Man builds with stone. His walls rise firm and tall.
Yet what God builds fore'er outlasts them all.
His springs plunge to the depths below
like liquid lightning from a bow.

I am a curse. Though powers of dark increase,
God acts, and when the poisonous slime, released,
runs off in a torrential stream,
the pure, clear waters crest and gleam.

God is strength. He wells up endlessly,
a fountain leaping upward, always free.
His rivers never will run dry,
nor will their music ever die.

The spring tide rises, drives the water higher,
and from it shoots a sparkling crystal spire.
Tossing, turrets spurt and spread –
swept downward and yet still upheld.

All is in flux: cliffs tumble toward the flood.
Through every coursing vein there races blood.
Winds blow, dispel the sultry air.
Stars orbit, now the sun is there!

God moves: he's not a steel-hard beam.
He is a fire: a steady, glowing gleam.
He is where flames leap, flare, and play.
He is where fountains burst in spray.

God is a spirit: an ever blowing breeze.
God is power: he quickens all that breathes.
His love is free to all, and true
in Christ, who saves, and makes all new.

Sannerz, 1923

Heinrich Arnold once said, “When my father saw, in himself, something that hindered Christ, he brought it before the cross and fought it through... After such struggles he would often write a victorious poem...and when he came out of his study he would be radiant – simply *radiant* with joy and love.” Heini was not referring to this specific poem, but he could have been, given its opening – “I am death...I am a curse” – and its build-up to a victorious ending where Christ “makes all new.”

Jesus: thou
eternal balm,
cleansing bath,
city of calm.

Wash us clean,
rushing spring,
clear and bright –
plunge us in.

Ocean vast,
sea of heav'n,
path of stars,
turn home again.

Cleanse us
in thy bath of light,
wheeling sun,
radiance bright.

Sannerz, 1923

Lanterns swinging in our hands,
we walk singing through the land.
Turn to the left, turn to the right –
everyone must see the light!
Up through the land, as one band,
light in hand.

Sannerz, 1923

God is our bond.
Take his hand.
Make your vow
unto him now.

Close the ring
with joy, and sing!
Dance in white
with garlands bright.

Spirit-primed,
move in time,
round and round,
center bound.

Starry dance
of suns, advance.
Music of spheres:
heaven to our ears!

God is the clang
of light, sea, and song.
Listen, see –
harmony!

Sannerz, 1923

Set to music by Alexander Weichert, an old family friend. Eberhard's son Heirich regarded it as one of his father's deepest poems and said that, it should not be over-used, but sung "only at holy moments."

At Sannerz the yearly lantern procession, a German tradition, gained new meaning: it symbolized the light of Christ being carried out into the darkness by his followers.

Recalling the daily "inner gatherings" that took place in the first years at Sannerz, Emmy writes in her memoirs that they made her "shiver with a deep joy and thankfulness ...Something of eternity was living among us; something that made us forget the limits of time and space...For those of us who experienced those years, the 'first love' remains unforgettable ...It is quite clear, of course, that no one can live off memories of the past. Today too the Spirit lives, calling people to 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!' Yet for every person the time of his first zeal and love will always be significant, and in times of weakness he will be able to turn back to it, as to a reservoir of strength."

Thy spirit is true –
thy light gives purity.
Its clear ray leads
to the Meal of Unity.

Thy spirit is pure –
world's torment dost thou heal.
Thou pourest wine,
longing's grail dost thou fill.

Thy spirit unites –
gives strength for peace to reign.
In spirit and might
shall thy kingdom come again.

Sannerz, 1923

God is spirit and fire –
apostle might, apostle pow'r.
He breaks the force of evil spells
and sweeps away the ghosts of hell.

God, thou spirit and might
that tears the dead from abysmal night,
thou art the Christ,
forever circling earth and skies.

God drives dust and sand,
shakes leaves and trees across the land,
blows the chaff in gusts –
the man he grips must trust.

Spirit of pureness – God! –
drive out what's rotten, dead, and old.
Calm our fear and pain,
chase off the plague of death's decay.

Field and wood he bends,
storm and echoing tumult sends,
and mighty thunderheads,
while all below is cold and dead.

Spirit of Christ, O Lord,
thy breath unlocks and closes doors
with rushing wind – but then
eternal calm and strength dost send.

God's spirit fills it all,
strides o'er the highest mountain wall,
and brings the farthest close –
yes, far and wide his fresh wind blows.

Sannerz, 1923

Speaking about the first years at Sannerz, Eberhard once said, "The Holy Spirit brought us face to face with the presence of God. Our rooms were filled with a power in those early days, a power that did not originate from us who were living there, nor from those who were our guests. It was a power from God that visited us, an invisible power that surrounded us."

The trampling of night's warring armies
grows fainter –
the temple-dome appears.
The threat and the tumult of battle fade
as peace draws near.

The rage of the fierce, foaming billows is stilled –
the storm has passed.
The wrath of ravening war-wolves is tamed
by the Spirit at last.

Gone is the fever, the torment of passion –
gone lust's fell sway.
The pureness of radiant light now unites us:
joy rules the day.

Falsehood and scheming have fled
with the darkness –
no lie remains.
Healing and lifting us, truth spreads its wings,
forever to reign.

Sannerz, 1923

The city: a maelstrom
of frenzied crowds.
Roaming hordes
beneath gray clouds.

Inhabitants distant,
though bodily pressed.
Streets without stars:
God has left.

Souls emptied of love,
a life-sucking sea.
Death-bringing marriages,
dull misery.

Slow-moving death,
creeping, then still.
Depravity, boredom,
another tired thrill.

Loathing for life,
despite all the glitter.
Bloody vines' drunken
torment bitter.

Twisted faces.
Oppression's breath.
Dimming lights.
The city is death.

If only renewal –
now so far away –
with holy force
could take hold today!

Let loose the tempest!
Atmospheres, break!
You prophets, arise!
Spirits, awake!

Sannerz, ca. 1923–1924

Set to music by Alexander Weichert, “The trampling” made a deep impression on Marianne Zimmermann, who recalled (2002), “When I first came to the Bruderhof in 1932, I was shaken by the forcefulness and fervor with which the community sang this song, with its passionate words of confrontation and battle – images of the spiritual fight.”

Reflecting the hopelessness of the large cities he visited on speaking tours, “The city: a maelstrom” captures a mood Eberhard describes in a letter to a friend, January 20, 1923, “In the hard struggle behind all these outward horrors that weigh us down, one feels deep disillusionment and general depression everywhere. There is a marked increase of the grimmest sort of nationalism... Large circles of German youth are betraying the sign of the Wandervogel with the swastika. Where are those who... wear the sign of the Crucified One? There is a great emptiness... What will fill this vacuum? Will it be the old filth all over again, the old degenerate nature? Or will it be a fresh, new wind of pure air – the holy breath of God?”

All is silent,
and we sense
how, deep beneath night's veil,
star-day breaks.

All things wait,
and we believe
that from the dying world
new life wakes.

In all worlds
the light must shine –
throughout all space and time
eternity gleams.

Jesus beckons,
and we marvel
how clearly from afar
his light beams.

Jesus nears,
and we watch
as he who comes to us
holds the sun.

Jesus calls,
and we hear
his voice – a spirit that
fills our lungs.

Jesus lives –
we live with him.
Life hovers over death's
atmosphere.

Jesus conquers,
radiant, striding.
He transforms chaos,
brings unity.

Sannerz, July 26, 1924

Man

Man – heart, body, soul, and spirit –
steel yourself, put on your armor:
mighty battles stand ahead.
Give yourself with every fiber,
lift your eyes to the horizon,
keep your ear tuned to the heavens.

Don't you see the breakers rising?
Don't you hear the death knell sounding
in the last hard fight for light?
This dance of death on dark'ning waves,
this bloody struggle to be saved,
is this world judgment's final hour?

Wait – the first faint beams are brightening,
tears on moistened cheeks are glistening.
Lovelessness is never the end.
Forget survival: find your brother.
Help each other take the rudder.
Praise the victory of light.

Steer out to sea, through death, to life!
Swim outward with the ebbing tide.
Stretch every limb, strain every nerve.
Man – heart, body, soul, and breath –
peace-fighter, sufferer of death –
give all for life: give your whole self!

Stuttgart, February 1924

Likely written with the Stuttgart YMCA in mind, Eberhard wrote this while on a public speaking tour, one of several he made in 1924. Other destinations included Nordhausen, Leipzig, Chemnitz, and Dresden.

The Schlern

Cliffs are clamoring, rocks are roaring,
craggs are crying, carrying echoes
from the heights down to the hollows –

sons of men! – while you lie, wasting,
stained by sin, without salvation,
perishing in chains and shackles.

'Neath heavy peaks, the gathering gloom
of crypt-like caverns and granite tombs
hides whispering hosts of spirit-ghosts

who strain the sins of bygone days
from out the mist. Now high peaks rear,
their summits clear – as if hoisted

by huge levers. Looming spires,
they rise still higher toward the skies –
great pillars over deep-cut chasms.

Chained beneath them, where the raw
debris and rubble tumble, fall,
hell, though bound, throws wide its maw.

From the depths of this dark dungeon,
frozen earth uncurls her fingers,
swearing a defiant oath.

Cliffs are clamoring, rocks are roaring,
craggs are crying, carrying echoes

from the heights down to the hollows –

sons of men! – while you lie, wasting,
stained by sin, without salvation,
perishing in chains and shackles.

But then: above the rocky ridge
the red and shimmering sun breaks through
like sunbeam-seeds on glistening dew.

Flames of sunlight, flares of heaven –
blaze up brighter, hotter, higher –
paint the sky with floods of fire.

Winds are blowing, moving, weaving,
with ethereal pureness breathing
new light into lifeless stones.

Over deer and chamois streaming,
sunlight falls, on sheer cliffs gleaming –
what grand heights, what majesty!

How small is man! With trembling heart
I see the high peaks' pureness, start
to live again, for I see God.

You rocks and walls: heave, quake, and breathe!
You winds, spring up! You cliffs, lift up
your hands and raise them to the skies.

You rocks, awake to life, and flower.
Bind every crag with living bowers.
You grasses, nod! Lights, herald spring!

Bright beams are weaving spring's domain.
O hear and see! New joy holds sway:
God's kingdom has drawn near today.

Sannerz, 1924

A dramatic massif in the South Tirol, where Eberhard spent eighteen months in 1913–1914, the Schlern is recognizable by its huge “fingers” – enormous rock outcroppings that jut upwards for hundreds of feet and are visible for miles. Note the complexity of the rhyme scheme. In each verse the third and fourth syllables of the first line rhyme with the last two syllables of the second line; the third and fourth syllables of the second line rhyme with the last two syllables of the third line; and the third and fourth syllables of the third line rhyme with the last two syllables of the first line.

You are the impulse of first love,
the root of each good deed.
Your spirit wakes and strengthens us,
us counsels in our need.

In you, O Son of Mary,
dwells the spirit of the mother.
May it dwell within us, too,
and lead us to our brothers.

You are the childlike spirit,
the soul of each true child.
Choose the simple-hearted,
O child of man so mild.

You are the only pure one,
your body is true alone.
You join man to woman
and quicken hearts of stone.

You are the truest soul of man:
you are his strength, his might.
Set us afire, and temper us –
unite us in your light.

Where faithful hearts await you
in love, grows unity.
You raise us from the dust,
forgive our sins, us free.

You love your bitterest enemies
with manly courage firm.
Your spirit brings community –
motherly and warm.

You are the one and only:
in you, all things are one.
What's mine is yours forever –
by you all foes are won.

Sanmerz, 1925

Up, join the battle now!
Up, with the hosts of light,
united all.
Demons of darkness smite,
break through a path for light –
give all for truth and right,
fighters to be.

Up, for light's victory:
wage hard war constantly,
throw yourselves in!
Warriors against mine and thine,
combat all base design –
stand till death end your strife,
fighters to be.

Up, in faith's saving power!
Mount where steep summits tower –
upward aspire.
Turn from the dark abyss,
flee the mass grave of distress,
free and possessionless,
fighters to be.

Sanmerz, March 25, 1925

Recalling the origin of the poem, “Up, join the battle now!” Karl Keiderling, who joined Sanmerz as a young man, said, “One day Eberhard called me into his study: ‘Come, sit down. I’ve made a poem for your birthday. I want you to sing it for me, so I can see if the words fit the melody!’ The tune was an old anarchist freedom song I had brought with me to the community... I sang the song three or four times, while Eberhard changed and improved it. From then on we sang it with his new words.”

Through deadly peril sailing,
driven by a sinister fate,
go throngs whose strength is failing,
a broken, dying freight –

despairing, without mercy
condemned, a foundering wreck
whose way ahead by darkness
impenetrable is blocked.

But wait: a light is beckoning,
a shining eye from shore.
And now a voice is calling,
it strikes the heart's deep core.

It rouses, wakes the dying,
and stirs the inmost womb.
Now withered limbs are rising
to bond with life anew.

And as they rise and stand again,
from death's dark pangs released,
the throngs sail on toward the light,
their close-bound ranks increased.

Renewed, they are united –
a circle firm, secure,
each hand the circle grasping,
by loyalty made pure.

The voice calls out once more –
this time a cry that takes their breath:
“Sail right on into death, alive,
and thus be saved from death.”

But courage arms their hearts anew
to sail on through the waves
toward death's night – to hell itself,
to conquer o'er the grave.

From death, new life arises,
for God destroys at length
death's vaults; removes the boulder,
and gives the weakest strength.

The once-dead throngs now gather
and rise to blaze the trail.
God's call enlivens them; it leads
them onward without fail.

Sannerz, New Year's Eve 1925

On New Year's Eve 1925, the date of “Through deadly peril,” Eberhard baptized his son Heinrich, Karl Keiderling, and Lotte Henze. Taking place at the *Waldquelle*, a spring near Sannerz, the baptism marked the culmination of a long and difficult spiritual battle not only for Lotte, who had been possessed by demons, but for the whole household at Sannerz.

Gloomy mists, lowering clouds –
earth, darkened star.
Rank weeds, vice – murderous hearts!
Is it a wonder the light is far?

A rally: turmoil, commotion, noise –
pounding drums and blaring brass.
At the back, coy girls distract;
hoodlums heckle, stare.

Nothing can stop the forward march,
the colorful display!
Rousing songs hit every street,
join the echoing fray.

Words unleash dynamic powers;
lightning-like they flash,
devoid of form or eloquence –
artless, harsh, crass.

Forceful energies of light
impregnated with power
herald judgment, redemption –
portend the final hour.

Far above the storms and tempests,
above the devil's bands –
above the raging hellish passions
another Power stands.

Though Eberhard wrote “Gloomy mists,” with its vivid description of a public meeting (a Nazi rally?) seven years before Hitler took power, he had been concerned about the growing influence of the so-called Brown Shirts since 1921, when they had taken over the Bavarian branch of the German Worker's Party.

Who is it who rules the earth?
Who made the universe?
At whose command does life spring,
lightning flash, clouds burst?

This force is God, if you believe,
even at death's hour –
so till your heart, root out each weed
that robs him of his power.

Earth shall be free, for God is might,
he sweeps all evil away.
The Spirit of radiant joy shall come,
and Christ shall lead the way.

Vice and wickedness are banished,
Satan's might destroyed.
God brings us little men into
his harbor safe and wide.

Protected and secure at last
they burn to storm the foe –
enemy forces scattering
as winds of victory blow.

Christ unites them, all-forgiving –
he is their guiding staff.
He enlivens and revives them,
is himself their path.

Onward, then, in Jesus' strength,
into the hostile land!
His blood – our one pure impulse –
unites our holy band.

Sannerz, February 1926

To live is to suffer,
for death is life's end –
dying, decaying,
shattered and spent.

To live is to fight –
to resist till you bleed,
and then bind up the wounded,
strong in your deeds.

To live is to triumph
in the fiercest of fights,
rousing the lifeless
as warriors in strife.

To live is to trust,
though robbed of all things,
to cry war on dark pow'rs,
yield alone to the King.

Life in the Spirit!
Snatched from their graves,
from Beelzebub's jaws,
the dead awake, saved.

Sannerz, Holy Week 1926

Radiance, descend!
Thou sun of all love eternal,
every impulse infernal
to the grave send.

Fire, burn away
all things to death consecrated,
all that with envy is weighted.
Consume it today.

Blaze forth with light,
suns of bright, brilliant beams,
stars in countless burning streams –
flare up with might!

Break in, we plead,
powers of eternal radiance glowing,
flood of fiery love o'erflowing,
hallowed to thee!

Shatter our night,
thou, who from death truly arose,
from whom pow'r everlasting flows.
Send forth thy light!

Sannerz, Easter 1926

“Radiance, descend!” was signed by Eberhard and Emmy Arnold.

By flaming tongues of fire
the dross is burned away,
their red-hot eyes discerning
the iron and gold – that stays.

Gold, once refined, will glitter,
and iron hardens to steel.
The Spirit's blows strike squarely –
pure metal they reveal.

Steel makes a trusty weapon,
and gold gleams in the light.
So may the Spirit temper us
and keep what's precious bright.

With hearts made pure, then, forward!
Take up the hardest fight.
Raise high your flaming torches
and send afar their light.

Sannerz, July 26, 1926

Drifting, trembling,
aching voice –
alone in the universe
echoless.

Foreboding remembrance –
wounded hearts' pain –
outburst of anguished
souls rent in twain.

Driven by obsessions,
dragged to the ground –
brought into the light:
freed! unbound!

Rescue, save
the foundering ship.
Chains, be loosed –
leaden weights, slip.

Freedom: strength
of victorious forces –
streaming sap
of creative sources.

Blazing sun
that ends dark hours –
joyous bliss
of loving powers.

Up from the deep,
from the central fire,
in cosmic union,
stars rise higher.

Loving souls
with radiant eyes –
once deathly ill,
now worthy and wise.

Love toward all,
oneness in One –
steadfast and pure,
for his sake alone.

Sannerz, December 1926

Eberhard loved the symbolism of fire; he wrote this poem on his forty-third birthday and presented it to Emmy.

Eberhard gave this poem to his sister-in-law Else von Hollander on her birthday, December 13, 1926, with the following dedication: "Full unity comes to us when God's love, his love to all his creatures, fills our hearts and rules our lives."

We'll meet once again
in struggle or calm,
lit up by a sudden flash
on us come down.

We'll meet once again
at home, as of old.
We'll meet once again
where battles unfold.

We'll meet once again
as one, at all costs,
united in love –
and none shall be lost.

We'll meet once again
by night or by day.
We'll meet once again
when all reawakes.

1926–1927 (?)

I. Death

The gloominess of night –
an oppressive, endless weight –
has brought us death itself,
and judged us with her fate.

Satan's power accurséd –
the leveling sword of death –
has pierced the compact thunderclouds
of sin, and taken our breath.

II. Eternal force

Judgment eternal
of anger's dark breath,
leaden weight infernal:
you have brought us death.

Surrounding the casket,
loathing death's hand,
dismayed, yet expectant,
silent we stand.

Rhön Bruderhof, New Year's Eve 1927

These two poems were written after the death of Ursula Keiderling,
a baby, on December 30, 1927.

Healed and redeemed, to the Spirit give thanks.
Torn out of the dark, join the fight and close ranks.
Whate'er was divided shall now be made one.
The three-in-one God shall repudiate none.

For now we have seen it: the Spirit is here.
Demons are scattering, the kingdom is near.
The dark is retreating, night's fleeing in haste.
By signs of God's closeness, devils are chased.

Arise, man of God, then, and go into death.
Let your frail ship be guided by unity's breath,
for great numbers are daring, though blown
by the storm
that fills its tall sails, toward night to be borne.

On those still divided, Lord, lay thou thy hands.
Quicken the hearts that are freed from dark bands.
Smoke rises upward, and flames blaze and scorch,
the wreckage decaying – but forward the torch!

Rhön Bruderhof, early 1928

In 1926, the Sannerzers bought the Sparhof, a rundown farmstead, and a few families moved there to begin renovations. In September 1927 the last members still in Sannerz joined them. Eberhard was relieved that the long-split brotherhood was finally gathered in one place. But as “Healed and redeemed” indicates, unity still had to be fought for.

Take the spirit I bestow.
Welcome him, embrace his glow.
Only believe: I hallow you.
The Spirit is fire, the Spirit is might,
he leads to my realm, brings life and light.
He is creator of all things new.

Receive the Spirit's holy blaze:
'tis he who works in you each day,
so trust in him, to him stay true.
He is the spirit of work and deed,
toward unity he points and leads.
Allow him, then, to strengthen you.

Give your heart unto the Spirit,
that he might tear evil from it.
He is light and truth itself.
Like a stream of love that cleanses,
his endless purity and goodness
leave you nothing of yourself.

The Spirit silences and kills
all bloodlust. He is never still.
His fight is Yahweh's holy fight,
a battle he has now made ours.
In him, the cross victorious towers –
and prevails with holy might.

Rhön Bruderhof, June 1928

In the first verses of “Take the spirit I bestow,” the speaker is God, who calls the church to accept Christ's spirit.

We are so base and rotten –
so often we withstand
the Spirit, though its storm winds
blow round our little band.

Defiant, stubborn, willful,
we shut out its holy call,
though it points to the kingdom,
there to unite us all.

And yet, too weak and wretched
to hold to the Spirit's heights,
we fall to lurking forces
of need and pain and fright.

So slow to move – to rally
and fight the desperate war,
we sleep through nights of crisis
and miss victorious hours.

Thou spirit of the mountains
come down upon our land!
Ring loud thy storm-bell summons
and muster our fighting band.

Far spirit of the heavens,
lead us into the fight,
that we not flag or falter
but conquer far and wide.

We pray thee, Lord of spirits:
lead us forever on.
O master of spirits, hear us
and consecrate thine own.

Thou art the eternal victor –
lead thou our feeble band.
Baptize us for thy service.
We're thine, at thy command.

Rhön Bruderhof, June 1928

Despite the tone of this poem, Emmy set it to the tune of “Der Mönch Waltramus,” a ballad about a lovelorn monk.

We call upon the spirit
of love to hear our prayer:
give us unity, we plead –
one way, unbroken, clear.

When each one intercedes
for the next, with faith in God –
when each for all can answer
as Abraham did of old –

then will our loads be lifted
and answers be made plain,
and by the Spirit, oneness
shall among all men be gained.

So, Emmy, let us never forget
our strongest weapon, prayer.
The Spirit would cleanse our hearts
and minds and bodies with its air.

Heart to heart united
in faith, we're bound as one.
No foe can ever divide us
on the way that leads to heav'n.

Rhön Bruderhof, August 19, 1928

Written at a time when Eberhard was actively seeking contact with the Hutterites of North America, this poem reflects his deep longing for unity with them. So does a letter he wrote three days later (to Elias Walter of Stand Off Colony, Alberta) in which he speaks of the brotherhood's "resolute certainty" that the Rhön Bruderhof ought to become part of the Hutterian Church.

Eberhard Arnold wrote "I must live for you" on the title page of a New Testament that belonged to Rose Meyer.

I must live for you, my Christ –
for you, just as you are,
and I must love you, my Jesus.
You seek all, near and far.

I must cling to you, my Christ,
to your healing, saving might,
and I must look to you, who stand
steadfast in every fight.

I must thank you, Christ –
you who chasten with your rod;
and I must hear your voice, my Lord:
you are the word of God.

I must hearken to you, my Christ,
as you arouse and call,
and I must trust in you, Christ Jesus –
you who created all.

I must trust you, Christ,
whether you take or give,
and I must follow you, my Lord.
You serve with endless love.

I must be poor for you, my Christ –
you who were sore deprived,
and I must be like you, my Jesus –
you who suffered and died.

I will sing your praises, Christ,
for you are Lord alone.
I am forever yours, my king –
I kneel before your throne.

Rhön Bruderhof, 1928

The darkness has departed,
and night is overcome.
Our nightmares and delusions
and anxieties are gone.

The sting of sin is broken
and robbed of its might,
and drowned in deep darkness –
now life awakes to light.

The gloom of death and dying,
the body's leaden weight,
the accursed thrall of ruin –
the Last Judgment seals their fate.

God's judgment is God's goodness:
in him these two are one.
So may he e'er protect us –
his light will blot out none.

Hearts deeply bound in oneness,
we gaze into God's heart.
Though wounding us until we bleed,
he points us heavenward.

Compassion in his judgment,
and judgment in his love,
he lights each heart – each candle –
with the Spirit from above.

And as our flames flare upward
to meet the rising sun,
each "I" is lost in "thou" –
all fires burn as one.

Thou glorious sun of morning,
engulf our feeble flames!
Across the vault of heaven
thy victory proclaim.

The light of morning wakens
new life, and death must fly.
New energies strive toward the light –
the watching sun on high.

Our nightmares and delusions,
fear, panic – all are gone,
for night is truly vanquished,
and darkness overcome.

Rhön Bruderhof, August 1928

On an early copy of "The darkness has departed," the poem is followed by a note in Emmy Arnold's handwriting: "Jesus mentions, as the most important things, judgment, compassion, and faith. All three are one."

I know a land not far away,
amid the empty fields.
The wilderness hems in its hills,
where seekers dig the yield
of veins whose undreamt depths
hold riches pure and bright:
gold, the treasure of those who have
the courage to unite.

The way to this new country
is there alone for him
who travels without any goods –
who has rid himself of them,
who gave all that he owned
in his old land to those in need,
broke loose from self, for Christ,
who died that he be freed.

This kingdom beckons us to come
and share its simple joys.
There, time-worn ways are shattered,
and “yours” and “mine” destroyed.
There, the greatest fool is he
who clings to his own wealth.
He gropes about in blindness black
and plunges to his death.

Yes, such a man is mired
far from the land of unity
in living death, unwitting
of greed’s deathly penalty.
So brothers, up to brotherhood –
community’s new day –
with all possessions on one heap,
what’s private, swept away.

Where no one seeks to build his wealth
or keep a separate purse,
where unity of spirit reigns –
there property’s a curse.
So let us leave our private plots,
to share all things anew,
and work and give with willing hand –
hail all those who do!

Rhön Bruderhof, 1928

United at last, we are at last made pure.
We follow the Spirit, whose counsel is sure.
We trust in his promise; we feel his touch.
We're freed by his breath from the fog's
 murky clutch.

The wind is changing. Now the air is clear.
Storm winds are blowing. Truth truly is here,
and purity unbroken, and flames that burn and shine.
Through every vein courses new blood, like wine.

Storm winds toss. The fire roars.
Blood-wine for the holy meal is poured.
The river is rising; its flood the grave
of castaway sin and all that enslaves.

The Lord is arisen. Life revives, and grace.
Justice is victorious in life's holy race.
New strength awakes for the course to be run.
Stand ready to serve – there's work to be done.

The hour has come: the Spirit is at work.
He masters the chaos, his power asserts.
The Spirit is speaking. The soul hears his voice
and listens, perceiving the teachings of grace.

Now it has happened: we have believed.
Our will's become action; we have been freed.
God works where faith lives, and faith means deeds.
Faith nurtures love, and love counsels our need.

Rhön Bruderhof, 1928

As he strove for a deeper relationship with the Hutterite brothers, Eberhard was stirred by their earnest belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. In a letter to the Anabaptist scholar John Horsch (September–October 1929), he writes, “Their prayer for the Holy Spirit proves that the truth is still living and active among them, and is not and cannot be extinguished.”

The Holy Spirit's gentle breath
is good and free and mild.
But man's hard will defies his wind,
and so he seeks the child.

Dead men resist the Spirit's call
and scare him from their sight.
Still, his uplifted hand makes clear
the way into the heights.

The Spirit comes as judgment,
as a spitting sea of fire,
melts gravity, and lifts dead weight
amid the circling stars.

The Holy Spirit brings us Christ –
he gleams into our night
and penetrates at once each heart
on whom he casts his light.

The Spirit makes us free and pure;
his streams flow all around.
We drink his strong and living wine,
with his fresh garlands crowned.

The Spirit leads us upward,
righteousness his holy name.
In him true brotherhood and love
throughout all time shall reign.

The Holy Ghost is great and strong,
'tis he who makes us one.
A sword that pierces heart and bone,
he speaks the truth alone.

Rhön Bruderhof, 1929

Come, take the hand of brotherhood
that we extend to you in love,
as guided by the Holy Spirit,
whose strength runs through us from above.

Our covenant is eternal truth,
our bond, the Spirit's purity.
Held together in holy love,
we stand firm in community.

Leave the dead State's service –
leave everything that's built on force.
Kill off the weed-seeds of deceit,
reject the worldly, wealthy church.

Take up the Holy Spirit's war!
Fight lust and greed for property.
Break with the worldly urge for fame –
let cross and shame your glory be.

A fighter for life, you've chosen death,
to conquer it, you are ready to die,
blazing a trail for the kingdom of God –
for his community, here and on high.

The plunge of baptism means repentance –
it calls for forgiveness and new life.
It bids us walk in the steps of Jesus,
whom God raised up amid death's strife.

Eberhard presented "Come, take" to the brotherhood as a song on May 27, at the baptism of nine brothers and sisters. Three days later he left Hamburg for North America for what turned out to be a full year away from home. Remembering the occasion in 2002, Gertrud Wegner wrote, "We children did not often come to special events, but this time Eberhard invited us to take part. The brook in the Oberzeller Grund had been dammed up to make it deep enough for immersion, and after supper we all walked up to that beautiful place in the woods. Eberhard spoke about baptism...and then baptized each one. At the end of the meeting we sang this song. I remember

And that life still is quick and holy,
for it is his who rose from death
and conquered it. And he is with us,
though the world's end takes our breath.

The holy meaning of baptism is
to rise up from the water's grave,
to stride forth, manly and victorious,
yet surrendered to God's reign.

Christ's body lives in work united,
devoted to one task alone.
Here daily life is lived in justice,
here man and woman toil as one.

The church is built by peace in action.
We wait and pray – O hear our plea.
As friends of God in work united,
we open all our doors to thee.

The quiet soul can hear thy voice
at thy approach, and calls thy name,
and throws itself before thy feet:
come, thou Lord, thou spirit aflame!

Send down on us thy fiery flood,
who yet know but the watery grave.
Immerse us in thy sun's hot embers,
all deadness in us burn away.

Thus shall the Spirit be poured out
and cleanse us with its searing force –
with flames that blaze and storm and flow
in one great fiery baptismal course.

Rhön Bruderhof, May 1930

feeling that Jesus was right there with us...We went home across the meadows by the light of flaming torches, our hearts full of what we had experienced."

Through struggle and loss,
death and the cross,
the church arose.
Despite man's guilt,
God's grace was spilled –
his Spirit blows.

Light broke the gloom
of self-love's tomb;
it cleansed and blessed
blood, pain, and distress.
In yieldedness
man stood the test.

Yes, Christ's clear call
drew one and all
to him, their Lord.
Thus unified
and purified,
they found accord.

In hellfire's glow
the raging foe
threw wide his maw.
Then mission called:
men went, gave all
to the lion's jaw.

By love spurred
to spread God's word,
forth brothers strode,
lambs to the slaughter.
They did not falter
but trod Christ's road.

Council and state –
powers of hate –
killed all in their path.
No man or woman
was spared the demon,
the murd'rous bloodbath.

Yet through all the strife,
truth pointed to life.
It could not be killed.
The reddening flood
of martyrs' blood –
persecution's yield –

gave strength and power
in the darkest of hours;
brought oneness, chased fear.
Thus, whatever befall
us, in death most of all,
the Spirit draws near.

In our time too,
we expect him anew.
His are the ages!
May God us inspire
and set us on fire,
and make us courageous.

Yes, let it be so:
that for you we let go
of life and limb –
our strength, our goods,
our body, our blood,
our goodness, our sins.

To you, Christ our Lord,
we give thought, deed, and word:
make them your own.
May our love, zeal, and work
belong to the church –
to your Body alone.

Let every life,
through battle and strife,
in your sight find favor.
May we not swerve,
but stand ready to serve
and never waver.

Alberta, Canada, October 1930

Written while Eberhard was in North America visiting the Hutterites, "Through struggle and loss" reflects his enthusiasm at the prospect of joining a church whose history was one of conviction, missionary zeal, persecution, and martyrdom.

God is unity
and endless purity.
Christ's love is alive,
a holy drive.

His is the mission
of shining perfection,
entrusted to brothers
who love one another.

We are these brothers;
this is our goal.
We carry the message
given us of old.

Long live our friendship
in spiritual kinship,
in love's strength, the root
of our holy pursuit!

Rhön Bruderhof, ca. 1929

United in the spirit
of the church, you sent me out,
and God has led me onward –
upheld, encouraged me throughout.

So pray my steps are guided –
that Jesus' heavenly kingdom come –
until, once more together,
we pray again, "Lord, lead us on."

Stand firm within his will,
who is purity and holiness.
He'll answer every longing,
and he'll prepare the way for us.

And let us trust his purpose –
'tis plain and clear for all to see –
as you've remained till now,
undeterred, in loyalty.

Yes, God's held you together,
his guiding hand is manifest.
No discord can divide you,
whom God with mighty powers has blest.

The movement of the Spirit
is the sole cause of this mission –
that God himself work change,
clean each vessel, and bring fruition.

Pray, then, without ceasing,
that the Spirit be never far,
and that we, his tools, be ready
to do his work wherever we are.

Would that the Spirit's powers –
the pure love of God's fiery heart,
the essence of his being –
new zeal to sleepy souls impart!

So watch and pray, untiring,
and know the answer's daily near.
How often have we waited,
and suddenly God's grace appeared.

I'll always thank the Father
that you can serve him in this way.
The ocean cannot part us,
for all we do is to his praise.

Alberta, Canada, October 1930

In a letter (August 7, 1930) to a fellow Hutterite minister, Joseph Stahl gives a good picture of Eberhard at the time this poem was written: "It is beyond description what joy and inspiration the man finds in our forefathers' writings. It puts us to shame... Arnold seems to me like a second Jakob Hutter, especially in his opposition to greed and to having one's own private property in the community."

The powers of wrath and darkness rage
and take up steel and weapons.
Their cohorts' icy mass rolls on,
the truth of Christ to threaten.
The state, with power base,
demands the greatest place,
would totally enthrall,
grasp altar, throne, and all.
Who dares to stand against this force?

The light of God is Jesus Christ,
as witness it shines out afar.
His flaming banner is his love,
and unity, his guiding star.
In life or death close-bound,
linked firm in circle round,
the church of God, made bold,
confronts the foe of old:
love's pure fire now encircles him.

The fight breaks out, a burning brand
that scatters sparks and embers.
Its light spreads far from land to land,
an eye that never slumbers.
Christ's agonies ignite
the world in fiercest fight.
God casts his judging light
on all with saving might.
No greater hour can man befall.

On November 12, 1933, a compulsory nationwide plebiscite was held in Germany in order to give every citizen the chance to voice support for the *Führer*. (Eberhard was privately warned that those who did not participate would be considered enemies of the state.) Unable to give Hitler a vote of confidence, members of the Bruderhof marked their ballots with a statement to the effect that their allegiance belonged to another leader – Christ. Four days later, the community was surrounded by the secret police in the

God's heart glows with the purest light –
his love, of all is greatest.
And heavenward drawn by love, the church
is freed to serve the Spirit.
Persuasion is in vain.
No suffering, death, or pain,
no threat to snatch a child
from home and loved ones mild
can drive away Christ's spirit.

Our brotherhood can never hate,
but even respects the foe
and faces him, upright and free,
and longs that love may grow.
No vote, no call to hate,
no idolatry of state,
no violence or force,
smooth lying that distorts,
shall e'er destroy Christ's image true.

So marching on with joyful stride,
in poverty rejoicing,
our strong, united band, at peace,
glad praise to God is voicing.
Our covenant, renewed,
in this dark hour has proved
the world's most urgent need
for God's reign to proceed –
it honors God, our Lord and King.

Rhön Bruderhof, November 16, 1933

first of several raids that took place over the next four years. The same evening, Eberhard presented the brotherhood with this poem, which they sang around his bed (he had slipped and broken his leg a few weeks earlier) to the tune of "A mighty fortress is our God." The original is marked, "A song of the fighting church... dedicated to our housemother and all the brothers, sisters, and children in her care."

Brilliant flame
of fire and death,
consuming blaze
of searing distress!
Jesus, to die for thee,
Jesus, to follow thee
in poverty and nothingness –
when laid low by lightning’s
judging fire!

Freedom from bondage
to life’s onward flow.
A change in the winds
by your holy breath blown.
River of motion
stirred by devotion –
by the world to come –
Spirit who holds us:
thou art unity’s joy!

Rhön Bruderhof, 1933

The poem “Brilliant flame” was found in the Rhön Bruderhof nightwatchman’s book in 1933.

“Eternal Word” was found in May 1936, among papers from Eberhard’s manuscript for “The Living Word,” the last chapter of his book *Inner Land*. “Communion of fire” was found among the papers of Hella Headland after her death at Woodcrest in 1972.

Eternal Word to our hearts shown forth –
Son of the Virgin, through the Spirit: O Lord,
thou unitest East, West, South, and North.
Thy new creation sings praise with one accord.

Fire-glow of love and radiant light:
bring down thy kingdom to our world of strife.
Truth everlasting! O leave us not –
keep us united in death, as in life.

Rhön Bruderhof, 1934

Communion of fire, in ardent purity –
communion of life, of radiant unity –
communion of peace: a luminous gleam –
of the cross, in a baptismal stream:
Christ, thou alone art the gathering light!

undated

“Communion of fire”, was found among the papers of Hella Headland after her death at Woodcrest in 1972.

Prayer

Lord, my only Lord!
I am yours, now
and forever;
and you are mine.
You are strength,
you are love,
you alone
are the Spirit. Amen.

Lord, my redeemer,
you are my death.
In you I perish,
in you I lose myself,
in you I stay dead.
In you I arise,
in you I breathe,
in you I move,
in you I am resurrected –
in you I live. Amen.

Lord, your love alone redeems.
Your love is everlasting,
for your love is pure.
Your love is kind,
for your love is God.
In your love I cleanse myself.
In your love I strengthen myself.
In your love I remain free. Amen.

Lord, you are spirit.
In you I am alive.
You are creative;
in you I act.
You are absolute.
In you I live
without being confined.
In you I love
without being restricted.
In you I labor
without being enslaved.
In you I am master.
In you I am spirit.
In you I am strength. Amen.

Lord, you are forgiveness –
in you I am pure.
You died for me.
You sought me out.
You are my life.
In you, all is submerged –
covered by your death –
and all is freely given.
In you, I am in God. Amen.

undated

The poem “Prayer” was found among Eberhard’s papers in June 1973 by his eldest son, Hardy.

It is finished.
He suffers and thirsts –
he is godforsaken.
He commends his spirit
unto the Father.
He unites his friends,
he forgives his enemies,
he accepts the thief
into his fellowship eternal.

Thy redemption shall be mine,
thy death shall be my death.
Thy blood shall be my blood,
and thy body, my body –

thy soul shall be my soul,
thy spirit, my spirit.
Thy fight shall be my fight,
thy strength, my strength.

Thy victory shall be my victory,
thy life, my life.
Thy purity shall be my purity,
thy love, my love.

Thy cause shall be my cause,
thy truth, my truth.
Thy sacrifice shall be my sacrifice,
thy resurrection, my own.

Thy kingdom shall be my all in all.

God is my strength. Jesus is my strength.
The Holy Spirit is my strength:

Thou art my strength to do any good,
thou art my strength to work and achieve,
thou art my strength on the barricades.
Thou art my strength, that I need no other
quickenings, and no other consolation.

Thou art my strength to be there for all,
as thou art always there for all.

I am judged. I am saved.
I am healed. I am sent.

undated

Early copies of “It is finished” are marked with this note: “The legacy of our Word leader Eberhard, found [in his Bible] after his death and read aloud as a most powerful witness to Christ on November 25, 1935, the day his body was laid to rest until the day of resurrection.”