DR. FRANK BUCHMAN AND THE GROUP MOVEMENT.

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IN preparing this paper I have tried to keep steadily before me the words of the invitation which has brought us together. "The great purpose of this Conference is to be practical in character. It has chosen as its subject 'The Way of Revival' in the hope that its papers and discussions may prove of practical help to the clergy in reaping in their parishes the fruits of quickened spiritual life."

Accordingly, I shall make no attempt to give specific answers to those criticisms of the Group Movement which have from time to time been made. Rather, after giving some historical account of the origin and growth of its work, I shall endeavour to describe and analyse its "influence in revival thinking and practice," and to set forth positively the contribution which it is making to the understanding and acceptance of the Christian Teaching on Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration in modern life.

But I must ask you to remember that my task is somewhat different from those of Dr. Macdonald and Professor Harvey. For Dr. Buchman is not the author of a *Römerbrief* or a *Das Heilige*. If you speak of a Barthian theology or a theology of Rudolf Otto, you can make definite reference to their writings. Dr. Buchman has written nothing. Firmly grounded as he is in the best traditions of Lutheran theology, he is primarily an intelligent evangelist, proclaiming the Good News of the Reign of God. Other voices have joined in with his, building up a full symphony upon this simple theme. But even so the score has thus far only in part been written down, and though I shall quote frequently from literature which has gone out with the full authority of leaders of the Group behind it, and though I have discussed this paper with several of them, including Dr. Buchman himself, the responsibility for this interpretation of the teaching of the Group must rest with me alone. Our "theology" is simply the theology of the Bible and the Creeds.

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The Oxford Group received its name from South Africa four years ago (in 1928), when six Oxford men and a Dutchman went out to travel in the Union and share what Christ meant to them. They became known throughout the country as "The Oxford Group," and thence the name travelled back to this country and spread across the Atlantic to America. But, like other spiritual movements, the story of the Group goes back to the personal experience of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," which came into the life of one man twenty-four years ago.

Dr. Frank Buchman comes of a Swiss family which migrated to America in the middle of the eighteenth century, and was born

at Pennsburg in 1878. As happens to so many, he was ordained (as a Lutheran minister) without knowing the white heat of Christian experience. For three years he had charge of a Church in an artisan district of Philadelphia, and then was head of a Home for working boys.

The year 1908 found him in England, at the Keswick Convention. He had resigned his position in protest against what he felt to be inadequate maintenance and feeding for the boys in his charge. But a feeling of resentment against the Trustees of the Home robbed him of peace ; what power there had been in his ministry had left it ; he had no message for other men.

It was in this mood that he wandered one day into a little Cumberland chapel. The congregation was but a handful, the place bare, and the whole setting outwardly uninteresting. But something in the words of the preacher (a woman) caught his attention and brought before him the vision of the Crucified Christ. He saw then the cost of the pride which had nailed his Master to the Cross, and went out from the little chapel a new man.

That night he wrote a full apology to each of the Trustees, setting at the head of each letter the first verse of the hymn " When I survey the wondrous Cross." Not one of those six men ever replied, but Frank Buchman had received God's forgiveness at the foot of the Cross, and not only forgiveness but a recommissioning for the warfare of Christ. Before that day ended he had been used to bring another man into the same experience, and with this new-found message he returned to America.

There for five years, at the suggestion of J. R. Mott, he was Y.M.C.A. secretary at a State University. With an openly hostile student body and a politely sceptical faculty, there was only one thing to be done. Through one of those romantic series of events which have the touch of apostleship about them, he was led into the lives of the three key-men of the place, the agnostic dean of the College, an undergraduate who called himself a Confucianist, and the " bootlegger " who supplied the students with illegal drink. Bill, the bootlegger, was won and became an active witness among his fellow-professionals. The Confucianist resolved to try the religion which had transformed Bill, and when a visiting Bishop addressed a great meeting and asked those who were ready to decide for Christ to stand up, he was the first to rise. Finally, the agnostic dean, impressed by all that was happening in the College, came to the same point of surrender.

It was during this period that Dr. Buchman began his practice of setting apart an unhurried hour of quiet waiting upon God early in every day. I have often heard him tell the story of how that habit revolutionised his ministry as he was thus guided into vital, personal contact with individual men. By the time he had left that formerly hostile University, twelve hundred men were meeting for voluntary Bible study.

In 1915 Dr. Buchman toured India, China and Japan with Sherwood Eddy, becoming an extension lecturer at Hartford Theo-

logical Seminary in 1916 and returning to the Far East in the following year. It was here, at Kuling in China, that the first "house-party" was held in the summer of 1918, when about a hundred Chinese and missionaries met for a fortnight to renew, or to find for the first time, a personal experience of God, sharing frankly together both the failures of the past and the appropriation of forgiveness and victory through Christ.

Since that time such house-parties have been held all over the world. But this Kuling meeting was momentous in that a contact formed there led to the opening up of the work of the Group in this country.

Dr. Buchman had already reached the conclusion that the English-speaking Universities on both sides of the Atlantic were at once the most neglected field of intelligent Christian evangelism and the most potential source of recruiting for that Fellowship of Witness which is the Christian Church. Now he gladly fulfilled a promise to look up the Cambridge sons of two Evangelical Missionary Bishops.

During that Cambridge visit the thought was constantly coming to him, "Revival throughout England." Walking down the street one day he was suddenly conscious of an inward urge to return to his rooms. He obeyed, and found waiting for him a prominent athlete whom he had met a few days before. The brief talk that ensued led on to another, long and intimate, on the following Sunday night, and the man put his life in Christ's hands asking for cleansing and victory.

Such an experience, once really possessed, cannot be kept unshared. To quote from the Rev. Sherwood Day's *Principles of the Group*:

> "'There is no vital sustained experience of Jesus Christ where there is not adequate expressional activity.' Every word in that sentence counts. It means that no high level of contagious life can be maintained without trying to pass that life on to others. A person may be very busy in good works and have practically no expressional activity. . . . We really come to know God as we share Him with others. An experience that is not shared dies or becomes twisted and abnormal. This is the reason for a type of very pious but very unattractive Christian who constantly tries to superimpose his will and way upon others. For such people religion is more often a hobby than a life. Expressional activity does not mean sitting on many committees or dashing madly about seeing that the poor have better houses, good as these things may be—it does mean using one's spiritual muscles to maintain spiritual health."

That principle Dr. Buchman always explains at once to those who surrender to Christ. He explained it now. Very soon this Rugger Blue was witnessing naturally and powerfully to his friends. More lives were changed. The torch was carried over to Oxford, where the same thing happened again. Upon the unshakeable rock of a personal experience of Jesus Christ the foundation of an enduring structure had been laid.

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That was twelve years ago. I cannot now describe all that has

happened since then—how in the hard school of experience, by discipline and team-work, these changed men and many others have grown into mature and far-sighted leadership; how some in "full-time" work, others in business or profession, are still passing on the good things they have received; how ordinands have caught a deeper significance in their message; how clergy and parishes alike have received a new inflow of life. Teams have gone throughout this country and to every part of the world. The widow of a great Scottish divine said to me the other day that she felt the Group was helping positively towards the solution of some of the great problems of the day—Church Unity, Marriage, the position of Women in the Church, and World Peace. I think of house-parties in Polo Week at Providence in New England, or for the smart set in Cairo at an hotel under the shadow of the Pyramids last November; I think again of a converted Communist leader settling down to work for His Master in a Glasgow slum. A group meets week by week in a drawing-room in Harley Street, and another in a Northern gaol. All are one in Christ Jesus, and to us all in the Group there has come an ever-deepening realisation of the everlasting truth that all things are possible with God, and that from these small beginnings, from the seed of personal salvation, there may even now be growing a revival which will spell salvation for every nation, class, and race. It is all as old and as constant as Christianity itself; and now, as always, it is gloriously fresh and new.

Some day, no doubt, the history of these years will be written. It will be a romantic document. Meanwhile, to have had a share in them has been to enter into a new understanding of the Acts of the Apostles and the letters of the Early Church.

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Our present task, however, is to consider the significance of all this for the "revival thinking and practice" of the Church of England. The opening session of this Conference has already affirmed the Centrality of the Cross and the necessity of Conversion. With this, and with much of the theology both of Barth and of Otto, the fundamental teaching of the Oxford Group is in profound agreement. It "takes for granted the great Bible truths concerning redemption" (I am quoting again from Mr. Day's pamphlet); like Otto and Barth it emphasises the "otherness" of God, the necessity of Divine action in the Incarnation and Atonement; its metaphysic tends towards transcendentalism while remaining firmly Christian; its theology is essentially supernatural.

Otto has pointed us back to the possibility of mystic communion with the Holy; Barth has pricked the bubble of humanistic Liberal Protestantism. But how is their message to be translated for the simple understanding of the ordinary man who does not read the mystics nor comprehend the categories of the dialectic theology? Here, I believe, the experience of the Oxford Group supplies a positive answer.

The coming of the Word of God into a man's heart is always a

mystery, a miracle. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit." In the ultimate analysis every conversion is a secret between God and the individual soul; every true soul-winner and pastor knows of the moment when his part in the work is done, when he has said all he has to say, and in the silence of prayer he stands aside, as it were, while the protagonists in this oft-repeated drama come face to face. But the experience of the Group may cast some light upon the understanding of this miracle, and I shall group the things I have now to say round our three key-words—Ruin, Redemption, and Regeneration.[1]

I. Ruin.

My theological tutor, Dr. Kenneth Kirk, told me once that he believed 75 per cent. of modern English sermons were Pelagian in doctrine, giving no Good News but simply Good Advice. If that is true, we are showing a strange disregard of the teaching of the Articles. "Original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man. . . . Man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit" (Article IX). "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and good works to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ, preventing us that we may have a good will and working with us when we have that good will" (Article X).

If there is one thing more than any other that I have learned through working in the Oxford Group, it is the essential truth of those words. "Fearless dealing with sin" is one of the principles of the Group explained by Mr. Day:

> "While the first great fact of history is Jesus Christ, the second is the presence of sin. Whether or not we like that word, few of us would deny that all is not well with mankind. We know this to be true within ourselves —we are so often 'divided, inferior, unhappy,' when we long to be 'united, superior and happy.' Now and again something within us flares up in anger, passion or utter selfishness and makes us afraid of the future. Life is so often drab and people boring. What is it? The Bible calls it Sin and the 'Group' has no better word. 'Anything that separates me from God or from another person is for me sin' is the simplest and most thorough definition that I know."

All this, of course, we have accepted all our lives and indeed have known from bitter experience how true it is of ourselves, along with what is further said at the close of Article XV; "All we the rest (although baptised and born again in Christ) yet offend in many things, and if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." But somehow my friends in the Group have known how to make this personal and concrete. They have insisted upon a fourfold standard of Absolute Honesty, Purity,

[1] i.e. The three words forming the sub-title of the Oxford Conference.

Unselfishness and Love as being the standard of Christ Himself—"absolute," notice, not merely relative and conventional. "Anything that separates me from God is sin"—anything, therefore, that stops God from using me exactly as He wishes in the furtherance of His Purpose that all men may be saved and come to a knowledge of Himself. That carries you down to a deep analysis of the roots of pride and fear. Self-consciousness is sin, if it prevents the natural easy flow of Divine Grace through me to needy men. The very multiplicity of good works is sin, if it hinders me from the exercise of my vocation "to be a Messenger, Watchman and Steward of the Lord, to teach and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family, to seek after Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world that they may be saved through Christ for ever." And that charge is surely given of God not only to "such as come to be admitted priests," but to every member of the Fellowship of Witness to which we belong in Christ.

There is a raising of the standard here, a growing recognition of how far we all fall short of the glory of God—so much further than we thought when we first believed. And that is altogether true to the lessons Christ teaches: He is ever "making as though He would go further" and calling us to follow Him. "There is yet very much land to be possessed." More and more we realise the truth of the words addressed to us at our ordination, "Ye cannot have a mind and will thereto of yourselves; for that will and ability is given of God alone."

Further, the Group teaches that we have not only to be ruthlessly honest with ourselves under the searchlight of God's holiness, but also to cease taking others for granted, to be ready (at whatever cost to our own pride and comfort) to face the fact of sin in them. While it remains absolutely true that "love is always eager to believe the best," it is only a poor pagan love that is blind to the sins of men. I quote once more from Mr. Day:

"The Bible frankly faces the fact of sin, but does not end there. It offers a cure. Jesus Christ took men exactly as they were. He had no glorified picture of them. 'He knew what was in man' and yet He was not bitter or disillusioned. He faced them honestly and fearlessly, gave them courage to do the same with themselves, and then showed them the way out. 'Sinners' understood all this and came gladly into His presence. The Pharisees did not understand and were afraid of Him. To-day there is a pathetic lack of honesty among Christians as to their own experience of sin—a lack which makes it utterly impossible for them to be used in dealing with sin in others. 'Bear ye one another's burdens' has far deeper meaning than merely writing sympathetic notes in times of sorrow or sending flowers to those who are ill. We would never look for help from a physician if we felt he avoided facing our physical problems, and the world does not trust a follower of Christ who, either through fear or pure laziness is unwilling to face the facts of his own life and those about him. Applying a pleasant-smelling ointment when the need is for a major surgical operation may have higher æsthetic values, but may also be criminal negligence. 'I came into the world to save sinners'—not to salve them. Getting the *facts* and facing them is necessary to the experience of truth in the material world. It is just as necessary in the spiritual."

All this is costly. Much of our dealing with people fails just here. We will not pay the price of taking people where they are. I am told that Prebendary Carlile, after a long lifetime devoted to seeking Prodigal Sons, is spending his last years in search of their Elder Brothers. They are ever with us, in our homes, on our committees, in our Parochial Councils. It is so easy to take them for granted. We are all so frightened of each other and cover it all up with a smoke-screen of respectability, but deep down, both we and they are really longing for the honesty that will face sin, bring it to the light and so let the gracious forgiveness of God fall upon it from the Cross. There is no cure for sin save that forgiveness through the Death of Christ, but slipshod diagnosis on our part is not likely to help the patient committed to our charge.

We have to face facts. An Oxford ordinand spoke to me the other day of "the intervals between the times of getting tight." Another in America, after coming for the first time into the true experience of forgiveness, said to Dr. Buchman as he was leaving, "I'd have damned you if you hadn't met my real need to-night." Recently another undergraduate came to me with a story of personal problems for which there is just no *human* solution at all. Faced with things like this, if I could not point beyond all human good advice to the Good News of God, I would resign my Fellowship here and cease to use my Orders in the Church.

II. Redemption.

But the Good News of God is true. And here again as we turn to the second word, Redemption, let me repeat that I owe it primarily (though not solely) to the Group that I have come into personal realisation of what I knew in theory long before. God *did* so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son and those who accept Him in faith *do* find eternal life here and now.

In the Church of Christ—I am bold to say among Evangelicals also—there are many theories of the Atonement. The Article leaves scope for freedom: "Christ truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried to reconcile the Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt but also for all actual sins of men."

I have been at pains to ask Dr. Buchman specifically whether he accepted those words as true. I want to put his vigorous affirmative answer publicly on record now. You may find representatives of different *theories* of soteriology within the Fellowship of the Group; you will find fundamental agreement upon the all-important *fact*.

> "It is well to remember" [says Mr. Day] "that it is never possible to find Life—peace with God—victory—Power—whatever names you use, by merely trying to follow out principle. That Life comes to one as a possession through but one gateway—a personal experience of Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

That and no psychological device, no new method of moral reformation, is the foundation upon which the work of the Oxford Group is built.

"Christ and Him crucified." That is the Christian Gospel. But what does it mean to preach the Cross of Christ? Some years ago the Rev. W. E. S. Holland was to take a Mission in Oxford, and a Quiet Day was held for members of what was then the Devotional Union before Term began. After tea some thirty of us were sitting in the Principal's drawing-room at Wycliffe talking over plans. "Tell me," asked Mr. Holland of each of us, "what it was that led to your conversion—the vision of Christ in His perfection challenging you to follow Him, or the realisation of your personal sin?" Thirty emphatic answers were given—half on each side. Mr. Holland had asked his question to obtain guidance on the character of his mission addresses. The answers seem to give it not only for that mission but for all Christian evangelism.

The old phrases from the Bible, from the Reformers, from our own immediate fathers and teachers in the faith, honoured and loved though they are by us for their wealth of rich association, may mean little or nothing to this modern generation which talks a different language. We have to explain what we mean by "The Cross of Christ," "The Precious Blood of the Lamb," "Justification by Faith." Too often, I think our very theological training causes us to fail some people here.

"We want to take them where we are—we superimpose what we want instead of dealing with what they want. Pedagogy knows the futility of that kind of dealing and one of its major premises is to proceed from the known to the unknown. It never begins with the unknown. So in the spiritual life; sin, failure, aspiration, longing are known to all; Christ is known to only a few. If we would lead men to Christ we must begin from where they are, and bridge for them the gap between what they know (sometimes only too tragically) their sin, and what they have not known—Jesus Christ."

Personally, what I look upon as the decisive moment in my own conversion came to me at Keswick through Bishop Taylor Smith before I knew anything of the Oxford Group, and it came through just such a concrete dealing with the known fact of sin, focussed in one particular sin, in my own life; from that I was led on from my powerlessness to seek power from the One I knew only in theory, Jesus Christ. Of the divine validity of that experience I have no doubt. It was followed by some of the authentic marks of re-birth—the discovery of the Bible as a new Book, a new experience of prayer, the beginnings of a message for my friends. Yet, notice this. Both then, and still more afterwards as a theological student, I had considerable intellectual acquaintance with soteriology. But it was not till nearly eight years later, during a Group house-party in Scotland, that a bitter realisation of my jealousy of others more richly used by God than I, as a betrayal of Divine Love and Trust brought me to a personal apprehension of what Christ had done on Calvary for me.

III. Regeneration.

Such considerations lead naturally to the last part of our subject, "Regeneration," with which we have indeed already been to some

extent engaged. "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our works or deservings." So runs the eleventh Article, and such is the foundation upon which the Oxford Group would build.

But this tells us little of the steps by which the believer comes to be justified, a point which so many excellent sermons leave obscure. It is necessary to explain and give content to the expression "by faith," to examine in greater detail the human side of that regeneration which is made possible, and made possible only, through the Atoning Work of Christ.

Here, I think, the meaning and teaching of the Group can hardly be better expressed than in some words of Professor E. F. Scott speaking of Jesus' teaching on "Entrance into the Kingdom of God." "It belongs to the essence of the message," he says, "that everything depends on one great decision. The one thing necessary is to surrender one's will to the will of God and all else will follow of its own accord." [1]

This is indeed a theology of crisis. "To be twice born is to be well born." However this surrender be approached, whether from a glimpse of the Cross, from attraction to the Person of Christ, or from a sense of personal failure and despair, the first element in it is Repentance. "Metanoia" is etymologically just a "change of mind"; but in its Christian sense it means far more than this; it implies "the expulsive power of a new affection," the re-orientation of the whole personality, the removal (even the violent removal) of life from its old selfish paths to the new path of following after Christ in whole-hearted obedience.

But all this is mere language until it is related to the facts. I may perhaps be permitted to quote what I have written in a pamphlet entitled *Sharing*, which was printed after careful checking with a number of leaders in the Group.

"We are in desperate need of forgiveness, and in the last resort, whatever aids we may use to help us to reach it, we must come to the place where we stand before God face to face, confess to Him our sins, and receive the forgiveness He so freely gives. There is no other way to fullness of life, and in our hearts we know it.

"Now, ideally, such confession as this would be made direct to God, without the need of any human assistance. But, unfortunately, we men and women are not ideal, and experience has shown the value of sharing with some Christian man or woman, as a help towards reaching this relationship with God. Let us be quite clear about it. Theoretically, there is not the smallest reason why a sinner should not confess his sins direct to God and receive, and know that he is receiving, God's forgiveness then and there; obviously, in fact, this has happened and happens time and time again. But in practical experience, and just because we are not ideal, instance after instance could be quoted to show that there are very many who need the help of sharing with another, in order that they may come directly face to face with God. For them sharing is a practical necessity. Only so do they grasp the reality of their confession, of the God to Whom they confess, and of the forgiveness which He bestows. The forgiveness itself does not

[1] *The Kingdom of God in the N.T.*, p. 82: cf. T. W. Manson, *The Teaching of Jesus*, p. 295, which reads almost as a reminiscence of Scott.

depend upon the sharing; its appropriation by the individual constantly does. . . .

"Once again, willingness to share with another person is an indication of true repentance. Experience shows that many go on verbally confessing the same sin to God times without number, but with no lasting victory. They may never have learned the difference between mere remorse and real repentance, while sharing with another person may be the means of bringing them to the latter. There are indeed cases in which the refusal to share has been the last stronghold of the pride which blocks the path to God; for such there can be no life until that stronghold has fallen.

"Such sharing as this naturally takes place with some individual who inspires trust and a conviction that he can help. It is private, and obviously a matter of strict confidence. Hence it can be detailed in character, and detail is usually imperative. In all cases such sharing finds completion in direct personal confession to God."

The cost of all this to God—the Cross planted in Time on Calvary and the Cross set from all Eternity in His Heart—may or may not be immediately realised by the penitent. But in every case the cry of the Prodigal is answered by the Father. The door has been opened; the Lord comes in to sup. We may trust Him, by His Spirit, to guide the new disciple into all truth in His own time and way.

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Yet the Christian is not born fully-armed and mature, but as a babe; and as the physical body needs Food and Air and Exercise for its growth, so the spiritual life requires the Food of Sacraments and of the Word of God, the Fresh Air of that true prayer which is communion and conversation with God, and the Exercise of sharing with others the new life that has been received.

This is an essential part of "revival thinking and practice." George Buchanan, conducting a retreat preliminary to a mission in which I took part last year, kept reiterating this point: "You must think from the first what will happen to the lives that have been changed after you have all gone away."

(*a*) These new-born children need Food. They must be taught to read their Bibles. In the Group we try to do it by our Bible study hour at house-parties, by fellowship for such study in parochial life, by suggesting the use of such courses of reading as are provided by the Bible Reading Fellowship. Teaching on the Holy Communion is less easy to give owing to the interdenominational character of the Group Fellowship, but many of us seek every opportunity of bringing home the meaning of our Lord's command to those with whom we come into touch.

(*b*) Secondly, the new-born children need Air. Let me quote Mr. Day for the last time:

"'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him': such was the experience of Samuel, of Isaiah, of Jonah, of Paul, of Ananias, and of many others whose records are to be found in the Bible. All down through history like experiences have come to those who were willing to take time and undergo the discipline necessary for hearing the 'still small voice.' In listening to God the general movement is from God to man—not from man to God—a movement which is distinctive of Christianity and was clearly manifest when the 'Word became flesh and dwelt among us.' In all other religions

man tragically, though often honestly, attempts to climb into the presence of God. In Christianity alone does God triumphantly flood through to man. Guidance is simply the experience of God flooding into a man's life, to give him direction and power. It is man in touch, not with the un-natural but with the supernatural—man in touch with God."

(*c*) Lastly, the new-born children need Exercise. I have already spoken of this in the first part of this paper, and need only add here that the Group is teaching valuable lessons in team-work. For truth is presented more adequately through a group than through an individual. A united front made up of various personalities presenting a single message carries conviction where an individual may not appeal.

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I will close, if I may, upon a note of urgency. Whatever we may think of the Oxford Group, it has thrown a challenge to the Christian Church. Time and again, half-humourously, half-pathetically, clergy, both Anglo-Catholics and Evangelicals, have said to me, "There must have been something very wrong with the Church if this Group had to arise." And I am afraid that this is profoundly true. The Group is no new method; it has no new theology; it comes with the old Good News of Jesus, mighty to save. And it flings its challenge to the Church that professes His Name to experience that saving grace afresh, individually and corporately, and so go out to battle in the world.

We are moving on from a long period of trench warfare, out into an open war of movement. Christianity and Communism stand face to face. The battle is being joined all along the line, even in placid, respectable, academic Oxford. I may be wrong in seeing behind the abolition of "Divvers" a reasoned step in a steadily accelerating process of secularisation. It is a fact that the "October Club," founded here last term, exists for the serious propagation of Communism. Its members are not just silly undergraduates; they believe in the doctrine they preach and would suffer martyrdom for it. One of them, a charming boy from one of the most famous Public Schools in England, talked to me for over two hours. I wish I could see such ardour and passion in my theological pupils.

That is the situation which we are going out to face, and the Oxford Group, as I see it, is simply the Church at work, alive to the nature of the combat that is to come. As Communism plants "cells," so Christianity must plant its fellowships of vital witness—and that is good Reformation doctrine, for it is exactly the "Kerngemeinde," the kernel-fellowship, of which Luther speaks. What are we doing? There is no room for compromise. The only vital people in the world to-day are those who are right out *for* God or right out *against* Him.