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OXFORD GROUP'S "ATTACK" ON LONDON BEGUN

ALL CLASSES AT THE INAUGURATION LINE OF CARS AT MEETING PLACE

From A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

Nearly 5,000 people were attracted to the Central Hall, Westminster, last night by the first public meeting held by the Buchmanite movement in its campaign to evangelise London. Women in rich evening attire and men in top hats arrived an hour before the meeting was due to begin.

Oxford and Cambridge undergraduates and girl members of the Group arrived in sports cars, and young Mayfair people crowded into the hall. There were also present office girls and servants.

So great was the demand for tickets that three overflow meetings had to be held in the library, the conference hall and Westminster School.

Enthusiasts came also from the Continent. One party from Germany came in a chartered aeroplane. There were two representatives from Canada.

ANOTHER "FIRE OF LONDON"

The main audience was 3,000 strong, and on the platform were peers and peeresses, bishops and some of the leading scholastic and religious teachers in this country and from abroad. A large contingent of undergraduates from Oxford and a smaller contingent from Cambridge came up for the occasion. The Rev. H. C. L. Heywood, Dean of Caius College, Cambridge, brought a party of twenty-five dons as his guests.

Dr. Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of India, opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of the campaign. The 300-years' old motto of the City of London, he pointed out, was "Domine dirige nos." This, he said, was not a proud assertion of civic pride, but a humble prayer, the expression of a need. It was the Oxford Group's hope to be the means of bringing an answer to that prayer.

After the Metropolitan had spoken, the meeting was taken charge of by the Rev. Cuthbert Bardley, Curate of All Hallows, Barking. He declared that the Group in its campaign was inspired by the vision of another Fire of London—the Holy Spirit burning through and inflaming the individuals of the great city.

"London is in need," he said, "of a tremendous renewing of life, under the Grace of God. We believe God has a plan and a purpose for London. Through the changing of her individual citizens she shall be given new vision, new power, new purpose, and bolder leadership—a leadership that will very largely be the leadership of youth."

There followed brief addresses from six undergraduates: Mr. David Graham, Mr. Basil Entwistle, Mr. Garth Lean, Mr. Peter Phelps, Mr. Charles Sergel, and Mr. Fred Tugwell. Despite the impressive size of their audience, these young men admirably upheld in their speeches the Group's demands for simplicity, frankness, and sincerity in what they uttered. Indeed, in the circumstances, their apparent lack of all self-consciousness was amazing.

Next came the turn of their elders. Mr. Heywood related how an "excruciatingly persistent" undergraduate had worried him—the Dean of his College and an ordained clergyman—about God, and had got him three weeks ago to go to Eastbourne, where the "team" was preparing for its descent on London. There he had been astonished at the absolute honesty and utter simplicity of their fellowship.

"For two of the most unpleasant days I have ever experienced," he said, "I held out against their unskopen challenge. Then I yielded in complete surrender to Christ, and have since possessed a joy I can quite honestly say I had never felt before. New courage, hope, and power have come to me. The last three weeks have been different from any I have ever known. If this is not the action of God, then there is no reality in any experience."

Mr. Cuthbert M. Cox, headmaster of Berkhamsted School, Professor L. W. Grensted, Oriol Professor of Christian Philosophy at Oxford, and Lady Fletcher, gave similar accounts of spiritual change wrought in them by the movement.

HUMBUGGING HIMSELF

Mr. Cox said that through the Group he had discovered that he had been humbugging himself all his life. "I was lazy, self-indulgent, and a liar," he declared, "and the good works I had done were a bargaining with God to balance the fact that I would not repent for these sins. Now I know a peace of mind that I had been a stranger to for years."

Prof. Grensted said the Group had been the means of giving him a vision for his university and new possibilities for thought in his own subjects of philosophy and psychology. There was no denying the power of the movement, for he had seen it at work in Canada, and had found that it met the needs of men of many kinds.

Miss Janet Woods, daughter of the Bishop of Croydon, was the only young woman who spoke. Dr. Jan de Bordes, a Swiss from the Secretariat of the League of Nations, gave an account of the growth of the movement in Switzerland, and the Bishop of Warrington closed the meeting with a short prayer.