

The Oxford Group



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VITAL RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

The work of the Oxford Group movement would challenge the attention of all earnest and thinking people at any time; but, in a time like this, it is really arresting. We are faced with fundamental disturbances in the economic and social life, with confusion of thought produced by advances in scientific research, and by the general temptation to lose contact with vital spiritual realities. In contrast, this movement brings a definiteness, a sense of reality, a driving power, that makes it seem like the fresh life for which we have been longing.

Of course, in the working out of its inspiration, different minds and temperaments will find difficulties and dangers. In the adoption of prayer as the guidance for all the affairs of life, there is the danger of the surrender of intelligence to emotion, and some of the worst pages of history have come out of that inspiration. The emphasis on the faults of the inner life may lead to a spirit of introspection that is not healthful. The grim realities of our social, economic and moral life will certainly demand a more definite program for their improvement.

But all who face problems of the spiritual life will feel that these messengers of a vital religious experience have brought us great help in many ways. They give us a serious challenge in calling us back to the need for changing the hearts of men and women; we have been so interested in the externals of religion that we may be overlooking the original and the eternal function of religion, the changing of the human heart from bad to good. In a generation that is trying to forget about sin, they remind us that sin is a disease that must produce weakness and unhappiness, till it is uprooted. They are on the right line when they make their demands so high and so absolute; we have often insulted the Gospel by making it easy and pleasant. They hearten us all by their happiness and sense of power; the life of the church would be completely transformed if we could realize their ideal of making every Christian earnest and active in trying to change the lives of people.

Only time can tell what can be made of its inspiration, but we should all feel now that a great blessing has come to us and we should want to help all we can.

—A. P. MENZIES.