



Th Oxford Group

BY REV. F. W. KERR, D.D.

Minister, St. Andrew's, United, Westmount.

The Editor, Montreal Daily Herald.

The Oxford Movement may easily become a disturbing influence in a community. That is because they propose to take Christ seriously. In their personal dealing they probe deeply, and compel a man to explore some dark recesses of his soul. They are convinced that some lives need to be drastically shaken up, old skeletons dragged up into the light of day, confessions and restitutions made, before the light can break through, and a man have the radiant consciousness of being at peace with himself and with God. Those who get the experience are ready to testify that it is worth the price. With one accord they declare that they have something now that they never had before.

The message of the leaders is simplicity itself. People go away wondering where the secret of its ~~strength can be. Everything seems so elemental as~~ elemental as the message of the Early Church—and as irresistible. They have only four or five dynamic conceptions. These are stressed and reiterated in every address.

The experience of every speaker has conformed to the same pattern. They have been restless, self-centred, chaotic, and bored to death trying to be happy. Then through contact with an Oxford Group, or at a house-party, they were persuaded to let go of the sin-stained past and to find a new centre in Christ about which to organize their lives. To develop and enrich their lives, they observe quiet times of conscious listening; then follows obedience to the voice, which is guidance; and the next step is life-sharing in the group, and testifying outside the group, and so becoming life-changers.

The success of this Movement is not due to organization, but rather to concentration upon these few vital self-evidencing principles. They do not attempt to cover the whole field of Christian thought. They do not argue nor answer hypothetical perplexities. The Movement is essentially mystical—the hiding of one's life with Christ in God. They have no theology. They are neither modernist nor fundamentalist. They formulate no new ethical conventions for modern youth, but rather accept the old-fashioned Christian standard of absolute honesty, absolute purity and absolute love. They have no program of social reconstruction. For all of which things most of us may be devoutly thankful. They depend for their promotion upon the method of each Divinely-touched personality sharing his experience with others. By their gaiety and their enthusiasm for God, by their making religion as natural as breathing, they commend it especially to young folks who have been groping after something real.

F. W. KERR.