

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIFE
OF
FRANK BUCHMAN

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MORAL RE-ARMAMENT

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I
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIFE OF
FRANK BUCHMAN

A VISITOR to America for the first time travelled on one of their marvellous Pullman trains where you spend the night and are looked after by a friendly porter. In the morning it is customary to give this man a small tip, but the visitor did not know how much. So he adopted the unwise expedient of asking the porter, "How much should I give you? What is the average?" The porter replied, "The average? That's one dollar." The traveller thought that was rather steep for one night. But he wanted to do the right thing, America being such a rich country, so he said: "There you are—one dollar." The porter said, "Thank you, sir, you are the first gentleman that ever came up to the average."

I can say of Frank Buchman that he is the first gentleman of my acquaintance who ever came up to the average. He is a very normal man. In one sense he is an average man. His reactions to most things are human and down-to-earth and very much like your own. He constantly brings his friends with a bump from great visions and noble aspirations to the simple, practical realities of everyday life.

A learned man from India came to see Frank Buchman in London some years ago. He sat down with some of us and began to speak for ten or fifteen minutes. It was so far above my head that I could not understand a word of what he was saying, and I was afraid that Frank would say to me at the end, "Alan, what do you think about this?" The truthful answer would have

been, "Nothing." At last the learned man reached the end of his talk, and Frank Buchman leaned over and asked: "What kind of curry do they give you over here?" The man's face lit up and he said, "Not good, not good." Then for ten minutes he talked very humanly.

In fact he talked so humanly that he managed for the rest of the interview to put his truths in a way we could all understand. When he came to leave, however, he remembered once more his dignity, and with a low bow he said, "Thank you, Dr. Buchman. It is always a pleasure to meet with holy men." "Oh," said Frank with a twinkle, "these aren't holy men. They are a pack of scoundrels, every one of them."

Even when it comes to the gifts he has spiritually, Frank Buchman has never claimed to have gifts or qualities that are not available to any man. After a day of colossal activity or a day of great miracles or outstanding events, he will stretch out in his chair and say, "Well, well. That's just normal living."

The thing that burns in him night and day is that the miracles that happen in him and around him happen to everybody all the time. Guidance, which to most people is an experience that comes every now and then, to him is as normal and natural as breathing. He often wonders why it shouldn't be as normal and natural to statesmen. With the gift of guidance available, why shouldn't the leaders and the ordinary man take advantage of it? It is normal living. I don't think we will ever understand Frank until we believe in our bones that the way he lives is the way the world can live.

For Frank Buchman, his way of life is—or could be—the average. Yet, like my friend in America, Frank is to me the first gentleman who really comes up to the average in our times, because the simple truths that are his he lives in such an uncompromising, fearless, constant and courageous way that he radiates a quality of life that is different from any other that I have ever met.

To understand the significance of Frank Buchman you need to look back over a span of many hundreds of years, to the period known as the Middle Ages, when the Western world, "Christendom" as it was sometimes called, was closely under the sway of spiritual authority embodied in the Church.

What was at one time known as the Christian world was in a very real sense one family. Like most families, it was very far from perfect. There were many quarrels. There was plenty of division. There was plenty of fighting. Its way of life would, to our eyes, be crude, barbaric, and probably very unpleasant. But at the same time there was right through the world at that time, between the years roughly of 1000 and 1400 of our era, a tremendous sense that you were born in one family under one roof. You lived in the middle-storey apartment of a three-storey house. Above you was Heaven and below you was Hell. You knew pretty well where you would go when you moved on. You knew how you were to behave and whom you were to obey while you remained. Every part of your life was closely controlled by a spiritual force.

That was not always good, nor was it always well applied, but it was very real. Art in those days was Christian art. Music was church music. Universities were training schools of the Church. The manuscripts of those days were copied and treasured in monasteries. Hospitals were religious foundations. Science was directly a child of the Church. The origin of our Western theatre was entirely religious: the plays were the mystery and the morality plays which dramatised the stories of Christ and the struggle for the soul of Everyman.

Politics were usually the affair and the sphere of the Church, sometimes too much so. Think of the scene at Runnymede where King John was forced to sign the Magna Carta. On one side of him were the earls and barons, and on the other side were the bishops and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was in fact far more the leaders of the Church than it was the leaders

of the State who planned and fought for Britain's charter of liberties.

Even business and economics were under the sphere of religion. The Church set prices. The Church forbade interest, or usury as it was called. The whole concept of economics and the way that business was done and money was handled was a spiritual matter. It had its bad side, but it was a magnificent reminder of the fact that God governs in all the affairs of men.

It did not last. Families grow up. Growing up is a difficult business and often painful and uncomfortable. It has good results and sometimes very bad results. The history of the years that followed the Middle Ages has been the history of the growing up of the family of Christendom where the children each began to say, "We don't see why we should stay in the home, or why anyone should tell us what to do. We have a right to live our own lives."

So art branched out with its own rules and developments. It brought tremendous new scope and variety. The artist was lord and master in his own realm. People began to talk of art for art's sake. Nobody in the Middle Ages would have known what that meant. It would have been much more real to talk about art for Christ's sake.

It was the same in the different nations. You began to get strong loyalties to your own particular country. "My country, right or wrong, Christian or not Christian." People began to put their countries before their Church or any principle of Christianity.

Politics and economics broke away. People built great wealth and mighty empires, and said: "Well, business is business." In the Middle Ages it would have meant nothing. Business then was part of the whole life of the man who lived under God.

Industry, science, geography, exploration, opened up a new world with books available in all languages to all sorts of people. Even in religion itself you found a tremendous new individualism.

The Church was split up, first into a few, then into many different sects, all claiming that they had the right way to the truth and asserting their independence.

Much of this was necessary, and good has come of it. But the age of Individualism has not satisfied the needs of men. Politically it has not brought peace, economically it has not spread plenty, spiritually it has not satisfied man's deep longing for a home on earth to train and prepare him for his ultimate home in Heaven.

Modern man is born into a world in which there is no real sense of a family. For a vast majority there is no one authority to which they can appeal. There is no one clear set of standards to which they can refer. There is no sense of a world family or world force to which they feel they can belong.

That is the background against which the great totalitarian forces have risen in the world today. They are a tremendous protest against the individualism and superiority and the false independence of the modern materialistic world. Their great power comes partly from their ability to give back to men the sense of belonging to a world force on the march. In the heart of every man is a desire to belong to something, to something great, and today, if possible, to something world-wide, something to which he can give himself wholly and without reserve.

Against this background I best understand the work of Frank Buchman. It is an answer both to the Individualism and to the Totalitarianism of our age, because it is an answer to the deep needs of the human heart. Moral Re-Armament is the home-ward march of humanity. After four hundred years of wandering farther and farther in the desert of Individualistic Materialism, it is modern man's rediscovery of the Promised Land. It calls him once again to a way of life and a form of society in which everything comes under the control of God. It is the great uniting force of our age.

This does not mean going back to anything that has existed

in the past; that is impossible. But at the same time Frank Buchman's work has close kinship with all the great spiritual movements of the past. Its earliest name was "A First Century Christian Fellowship." His followers have been described as "Franciscans in modern dress." The great religions of the East feel at home with his teaching. The Koran says: "Lead us to the good road."

Yet, with all that, there are certain factors in his work that make it unique in history, and uniquely suited to meet the special needs of today.

1. Any great idea that is going to answer the need of our time must be global. It is not enough to think in terms of a nation or a race or a class. To answer the needs of the world you have got to think of the whole world. As you come to know Frank Buchman, one of the first things that strikes you is his world thinking. From early days he was a traveller. Forty years ago he visited this very place, Caux, and stayed at Mountain House, and it was from here that he went to England and to the experience in the little church in the Lake District that was the turning point of his life.¹

Later on, after his change, Frank Buchman was constantly travelling. He spent much time in India, in China. He went to Australia, Malaya, Japan, South Africa. There are few countries of the world he has not visited. And wherever he goes he is at home. He has a way of making himself part of the country he goes to. If you have ever seen Frank receive a gift from an Oriental friend, in the way he receives it he almost becomes a man of the Orient himself because his love of those people is so deep in his heart. He has had great battles with some of us English to help us shed our English ways as we travel around the world. I remember the first time we were invited to speak before delegates to the League of Nations in Geneva. I turned

¹ For an account of this experience see *Remaking the World*, by Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman (Blandford Press, 1947), page 188 ff.

up in my old grey trousers and tweed coat, and Frank pounced on me: "Alan, you are not in Oxford."

From the start he has proclaimed a message, "above race, class and personal advantage." He never wavers from the truth that anyone can listen to God, no matter what he has been, what he has done or what his previous beliefs or lack of beliefs. That is a revolutionary conception of Christianity. It revolutionises much of our idea of Christian missions. Frank is a convinced Christian. But he believes in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead people into all truth, and he does not force or hurry that Divine leading. His message is global. It is for any man, anywhere.

2. Although Frank's thinking and planning are always global and world-wide, everything he does is based on his concern for the individual. That is important, because it is hard to proclaim a great idea that is world-wide in scope and yet gives free, full play to the individual man.

When Frank came to Oxford in 1921 he did not start a new society. Oxford is full of societies, and a new society might have flourished and grown and made its sensation and probably died in two or three years. Frank did not start a new sect or a new movement. He would say to us in the old days, "Have an immense preoccupation with the individual man." Frank loves people and builds everything on that love. He had a father who was very much a man of the world. He used to walk down the street of his home town, Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, and speak with everyone whom he met. He knew men and there was something gracious and spacious in his friendliness and hospitality. Frank said to me one day, "From my father I got my love of the ordinary fellow."

In 1909 Frank Buchman was invited to take charge of religious activities in Pennsylvania State University. A series of recent student strikes had alarmed the authorities. Morale was low. Buchman singled out three men and he had guidance to

change those three men. They were a popular professor, a very delightful but atheistic undergraduate, and a college porter who was a bootlegger. Those three men were changed. Through this the whole atmosphere of the university was affected. Hundreds were changed. Within four years 1,200 students were attending regular Bible studies in the Fraternity Houses. But it was all based on the individual man.

One finds two attitudes to human nature in the world. People will say human nature is good. All you need to do is set it free. These are idealists, people who feel that human nature, if only you will just set it free from poverty and oppression and difficulties, will come into its own and will be good. Then there are other people who feel human nature is fundamentally bad and must be curbed by controls and, if necessary, crushed. The world at the moment is caught between those different philosophies. Neither works, because human nature set free can run wild, and human nature curbed and crushed can never fulfil its destiny. But human nature, changed by God, can build a new world.

Frank is very blunt and realistic about people. At times he uses strong, rugged language about, or, more likely to, a person, so strongly does he feel the cost of compromise. In the same breath he believes passionately that they can be changed. I have heard Frank say about a person, "That fellow is a trouble maker," or something equally pungent. Ten minutes later you find Frank speaking from his heart to that person, changing him. That is a realistic answer to our modern civilisation. Frank knows that human nature is under the control of evil, that evil is a tremendous force in the world, and yet he knows human nature can be changed and can be guided.

In the old days in Oxford, we had a saying that was often hard for me to accept: "If you're not winning, you're sinning." That is to say, if you are not winning others to a new victory, you are pretty sure to be living in defeat yourself. Without life-

changing, there is no Moral Re-Armament, and, I would add, no vital Christianity. And world-changing through life-changing is the A and the Z of Frank's day.

3. The only adequate bridge between an effective individual work and an effective world work is the conception of the team. Frank has based everything on the building of a team. He judges results not by the things he does well but by the things he trains others to do better. You do not feel with him that he is promoting a cause. He is living a life. And he invites and inspires others to live that life with him—together. He never works alone.

4. This brings us to another very vital point that Frank is bringing to the world: his attitude to material things. If you are going to bring a great idea to answer the world today, you have got to have the answer to the material needs and problems of the world, an answer to questions of money, food, labour and housing.

Once again, broadly speaking, you will find two points of view about the material things of the world. In the first place there is the philosophy that material things are the great reality, the gospel of materialism. You get it in one form in Russia, in another form in America, in Switzerland and the other democracies. You get it among very correct people; very nice people; very respectable people; people who profess to be Christians, but who live really for the gospel that much the most important thing is what you have, or perhaps what you do not have!

Then there is another philosophy, that material things are, in themselves, bad, that the great thing today is to live above them, that we are somehow too good or too advanced to bother with such sordid things. The first Christians came across that point of view in the early days of the Church: people who thought they were so spiritual or so much better than others that material things just did not matter. The result was that they often did whatever they liked about material things and lived

in great immorality, because, after all, if the flesh did not matter anyway, it did not matter what you did with it. You will sometimes find among Christians that they are the sloppiest, most unpractical people when it comes to the material things in the world. And in other religions you get a tendency to believe that to escape from the material things in the world altogether is man's highest goal.

Once again Frank brings back to the world the true answer to materialism, and the true attitude to material things. Frank has always said: "People matter more than things." Nearly everyone professes that. It is very interesting to see how Frank lives it. Possessions mean little to him, except as he can share them with as large a number of people as possible.

Or take for example the question of money. Frank's attitude to money has always been that people matter more than money. His plans have never been determined by money. His plans have come in guidance and he has gone ahead in faith that if he cares for people and follows guidance, money will come. "Where God guides, He provides."

I remember years ago in Britain when a leader of the unemployed with a great deal of bitterness in his heart came to see Frank. He asked a number of questions and raised many problems. At the end, Frank pulled out his wallet, and he said: "That is all the money I have. You take half and I will keep half." That man has always claimed that he learned more about the answer to inequality and want from that incident than from many books or weighty statements.

"If everybody cared enough and everybody shared enough, wouldn't everybody have enough?" That is true not only for us at Caux, but it is true for the whole world. It would answer unemployment, the booms and crashes of the capitalistic world. It would answer the great contradictions and clashes which Communism is claiming to answer. It is sound, practical economics, and he lives it.

Frank lives the belief that people are more important than things. If you put people first, things are added. But just because of that very fact, Frank has a tremendous care for things. For he believes that everything in this world could be under the control of God and part of God's plan for changing the world. Somebody asked Frank a little time ago: "What is the secret of your work and success?" and Frank gave a strange reply. He said: "I think my secret is a tremendous attention to detail." Whether it is the way a stamp is put on an envelope, a picture hung on a wall, or a scene is set on the stage, his passion is that they should be done right. I think he got this from his mother in the first place, a very great woman accustomed through Swiss ancestry to doing things in the right way. Frank will often insist on the way things ought to be done in the home or in a meeting or on a journey, not in order to fuss or because things in themselves are so important, but because that is part of life-changing. A meal beautifully served may be the first stage in winning a statesman. When things are right you have made the setting for people to be right. Frank's whole attitude to material things is that under God they can be used to change people. The art of hospitality and the art of life-changing are for him closely related.

A few of us once went with Frank for a holiday in Sarasota, Florida. It was the training ground in the winter for the great Ringling Circus, and we went all round and saw everything. You might wonder what Frank was doing with a circus, but Frank knew that a circus is loved by every child in America. If you win a circus you win the millions. Frank invited those people to his home. Some of them were changed, and we used to meet them later in the year in many places where we went and found them fighting for a new spirit. Frank will use anything and everything to reach people and change the world.

Frank's conception of democracy is not a levelling down of everybody to the same dull mediocrity. It is a burning, fighting

passion that each individual shall have and be the best under God. He believes in the aristocracy of every man. At the right time and in the right circumstances, under God, everyone should have special care, special attention, special privilege. At all times, everyone has the privilege of change and serving others. People have said that Frank pays special attention to "important people." He does! And he believes that you are an "important person." The ordinary man, under God, can do the extraordinary thing. In the same way, fame, influence, titles, wealth, position—all are important, not for what they bring you, but for how they can be used under God.

"Under God"—we come back again and again to that fundamental principle. For Frank it is the great truth that gives perspective and proportion to all the others. "We must be governed by God, or we condemn ourselves to be ruled by tyrants."

Last of all I would like to speak of his tremendous fighting heart. I have known Frank for twenty years. I have seen him in moments of great victory and I have seen him in very dark moments when everything he fought for and believed in seemed to be going. I have seen him under tremendous attack. I have never for one minute seen his courage flinch or his faith fail.

Frank was, as you know, very ill in America some years ago. When he was still a very weak man, barely able to sit up and speak, a vicious attack came out on one of the front pages of a New York paper on him and his work. We wondered very much at that time whether we should show this to Frank. Humanly, it seemed a foolish thing to do. The guidance was, "Show it to him." With some trembling we showed it to him. He looked at it, took it in his hand, smiled and said: "Well, we have made the front page."

I remember another time when a book about Frank came out. It was brought out by a group of extreme materialists. It was typical of the kind of sneer that anyone who is out for

the right thing is bound to encounter. The whole book was venomous and libellous. A reporter asked Frank sometime later what he thought of the book, and Frank beamed and said: "Well, they spelt my name correctly."

Frank is a fighter. We none of us know fully what he is carrying in a day. Frank has a world and countless individuals all over the world on his heart, people who are facing great decisions, people who are in need, people who have the fate of nations on their hands. He is living every minute of his life in the lives of other people. He is awake long hours of the night, praying for them and getting guidance for them. His fighting spirit never stops. He never compromises. Through all the years Frank has fought on for absolute standards—in us, in himself, and in the world.

In the speech that he made in Visby,¹ in Sweden, he said: "I am going to promise you one thing. I am not turning back, no matter who does, no matter what it is going to cost. You will never, never come into this experience until you know the cross of Christ." That is his secret and that is what he is giving to the world. It is our mission to carry it on to the generations that come.

¹ *Remaking the World*, page 64.

II

FRANK BUCHMAN

*From the Introduction by Alan Thornhill to REMAKING THE WORLD,
the collected speeches of Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman*

FRANK BUCHMAN stood amid the green, gently rolling hills of Pennsylvania. It is the countryside in which he was born and brought up, and it was the spot where his parents lie buried and where he himself hopes one day to rest. Gripped by deep emotion he stood for many minutes in silence. Then quietly he repeated to himself several times the words "I have been wonderfully led."

Many have set themselves to characterise the life and work of this man. Between them they have all but exhausted the vocabulary of love and loyalty and of hatred and prejudice as well. His own verdict on his life is strangely unaffected by either. It is always the same, "I have been wonderfully led."

The man who uses these words so simply and so naturally lives in the full midstream of the twentieth century. He loves humanity, not in the abstract but in the railway carriage. He can take up his abode in any one of thirty different capitals, and live and move among friends as though he had been there half his days. In countless homes, great and small, he is at home. He loves life because to him life is always people. He enjoys pleasures and he turns pain to rich account. To him every occasion from the simplest meal to the history-making event is something to be savoured and experienced and used to the very full, something to be woven into the texture of a great over-arching plan.

He is a man of his age; yet no man has more vigorously countered the prevailing trends of his age. In an age of mass materialism he has fought to put people before things. In an age of self-seeking individualism he has demonstrated the effectiveness of selfless teamwork. In an age of Godless dictatorships he has rekindled the militant Christian heart of democracy.

For the full understanding of his work it is above all necessary to bear in mind two things. First: the key to it is to be found not in theory but in experience. How that experience first came to him is told, partly in his own words, at the end of this book.¹ How that experience has blossomed and borne fruit through the years the reader of this book will be able to judge for himself. The second point is this: for Frank Buchman a personal knowledge of Christ is not a thing to be folded away and secretly treasured; it is to be put to work for others. "The best way to keep an experience of Christ is to pass it on," he says; and he sees no limit to its effectiveness in a world where millions in every nation are athirst for spiritual reality.

Among the gifts bestowed on Frank Buchman is the rare ability to give his full heart to the individuals who surround him and at the same time always to maintain the perspective of national and world-wide needs. And the answer for one is the answer for both. Saint Augustine once said that he never had any difficulty in believing in miracles since he had experienced the miracle of change in his own heart. For Frank Buchman there has never been the shadow of a doubt that the Power which changed him was able to change the world.

And so it is that in an age of revolutions he has fostered the greater revolution, which anticipates and answers all other revolutions by dealing radically and constructively with the hearts of men. In an age of ideologies he has given compelling expression to the one ideology which, because it answers the deepest needs in human nature, is as universal as human nature

¹ See *Remaking the World*, p. 188.

and so offers the one hope of unity to a torn and divided world.

The originator of the Oxford Group and of the programme of Moral Re-Armament was born on June 4th, 1878, in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. His family was cradled and nurtured in a love of liberty. Two hundred years ago his Swiss ancestors left their home in St. Gallen and sought freedom and opportunity in the youthful State of Pennsylvania. Today these thriving, thrifty "Pennsylvania Dutch" communities, with their trim farmhouses and their gaily-painted barns, their spotless kitchens, and their lovingly tended churches and churchyards, still speak of generations brought up with Christian democracy in their blood. Here are folk who reverence God and love life.

Frank Buchman still likes to take his friends to the simple, dignified streets of Allentown and to show them his old home where as a boy he loved to paint pictures, plan fishing trips and above all entertain his friends. The Buchman home was always full of people, and even now, after so many years, if Frank returns on a visit, he will not be there more than an hour or two before old school friends and neighbours begin to drop in and call. Once, as a boy, Frank escorted twelve girls to a dance, not wanting any of them to miss the fun. Mary the cook used to say you never could tell how many there would be for dinner, because you never knew how many people Frank would meet in the street on his way home.

Shortly after graduating from Muhlenberg College, he went to live in the poorest part of Philadelphia and there founded a hospice for orphans and destitute boys. When, later on, he was appointed leader of Christian work in the State University of Pennsylvania, one of his best friends was Bill Pickle, the hard-drinking bootlegger, who not only changed his own ways but powerfully affected generations of students long after Buchman himself had left.

Everything he is and does springs out of an all-consuming care for people. "Have an intense preoccupation with the individual person," he would say to his early followers in Oxford. He has no use for the kind of Christian work that deals with crowds and masses, but neglects the individual. "It's no good throwing eye-medicine out of a second-storey window," he says.

I have never met anyone who knows so quickly and so surely what is going on inside another person. In a room full of people he has an unerring eye for the one who specially needs help or encouragement, a stimulating challenge or maybe a drastic warning. I have gone to him expecting a rebuke for some serious mistake, only to get the warmth and welcome of a father and the complete understanding of a fellow-offender. I have equally gone to him expecting a pat on the back and received a well-merited dig in the ribs. Frank Buchman seldom gives a man what he expects, but nearly always what he needs. His understanding of men is a priceless gift and a costly one. "I asked God," he told me, "to make me super-sensitive to people. And there have been times when I have been tempted to wish I had never prayed that prayer." For to know men and women as they are, and yet to know what they can be, is to be committed to a life-long human battle that demands endless sacrifice. He burns with impatience at the miserable picture that most of us have of the lives of our fellows, and the equally meagre vision we have for our own. And that applies to the clerk at the desk, to the cook in the kitchen and to the Cabinet Minister in the council chambers of State.

Once in Edinburgh he found himself at a dinner party next to an elderly lady who told him that after a life devoted to good works she was now "getting ready to die." "Ready to die!" said Buchman. "Why not start to live?" And it was that lady whose vision opened up the way for the work of the Oxford Group in Geneva and the League of Nations in the years between the wars.

In 1921 Frank Buchman was invited to Washington by a military member of the British delegation to meet delegates to the Disarmament Conference. Hopes were high that Pacts and Leagues would outlaw war. He was convinced that nothing would succeed unless the transforming power which he had seen at work in individuals be brought to nations. As he travelled on the night train to Washington, the conviction came to him to resign the comfortable University post which he held. Since then he has never drawn a salary nor had the security of a human position.

Three months later he returned to England, where he had previously been invited by two Anglican bishops. He had come to Oxford unheralded and unknown. One by one he had met people and made friends. He loved and understood that sceptical, restless, war-scarred generation. He listened to their theories about life and told them true stories about people. He answered arguments with experience. Some of the leading undergraduates of the University gathered around him. Many who had been problems to the authorities became pioneers in a new spirit. Prayer was publicly offered from a University pulpit giving thanks for the illumination that had come to Oxford.

In these early years his task was mainly that of choosing and training leadership. Men came to him for help, and stayed with him for life. His conception of Christian living was not measured by his own achievements but by the growth and quality of those around him. Where other men founded organisations he tended the growth of an organism. Others were exhorting the world with pronouncements. He encircled the world with a family. Then, as now, he bound no one to him by vows or commitments or by financial or other ties. Thousands were bound to him and to each other by unbreakable bonds of caring and loyalty. He issued no orders. Every man has the privilege of being personally guided by God.

Each year his work grew and spread from country to country.

In 1928 several South African Rhodes Scholars and other Oxford students travelled to South Africa. They had something to say to the nation that came with the fire of personal conviction. Their visit was news. They were christened "The Oxford Group," the name which has since gone with them around the world. A larger group led by Dr. Buchman himself returned the next year. Twelve years later, in 1941, though war had stirred the racial tensions in the country, the Hon. Jan H. Hofmeyr, Minister of Finance and right-hand man to General Smuts, and other prominent South Africans, wrote of that visit that it was "of national significance and started a major and continuing influence for racial reconciliation throughout the whole country, white and black, Dutch and British."

As the years passed, his work took on new scope and even greater urgency. I remember walking with him on a golden English summer day in the early Thirties. I remarked on the beauty of some ancient buildings that we were passing. He broke in suddenly, "Yes, but in a few years, they will be gone—unless we change." At the time I thought he was merely trying to startle me with a figure of speech. The tragedy is so many others thought so too.

Back and forth across the Atlantic, in America and Canada, in Holland, Switzerland, Scandinavia and many other parts of the world, he travelled, working unceasingly. But he never travelled alone. Where he had once gone quietly with a handful of friends, now he was setting hundreds, even thousands of vital, propagating Christians on the move. He showed a general's genius for massing spiritual forces at the right place at the right time to make the greatest possible impact. With him the ordinary man found himself doing extraordinary things. Statesmen began acting like Christians. Christians like statesmen. To many a church leader he gave an entirely new conception of the familiar words, "Like a mighty army moves the Church of God."

Few of his followers in those crowded years before the war realised the full significance of what, under Frank Buchman's leadership, they were being inspired to build. They hurriedly packed their bags and moved to and fro across the world. They lived in crowded streets and spacious homes. They addressed huge assemblies and their words were translated into many languages. Among them, as they worked and journeyed together, there might be an ex-agitator from East London or a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, a group of Army officers or Trade Union leaders, a courtly Oriental philosopher or a raw, rumbunctious American "teen-ager." It made no difference. They were all part of a world-wide family. They were a classless society. They were Christian democracy in action. They learnt the difference between the little things they could do alone and the magnificent things they might do together. With some pain as well as much joy they discovered the fascination and power of a team. "He is a big frog in a little pond," Frank Buchman would say of some worthy but inflated individualist. And, in a whimsical afterthought, he added once, "The Oxford Group is a big lake where a lamb can wade and an elephant can swim."

And all the time, while totalitarian forces were rising to conquer the earth, men of every colour and creed, under Frank Buchman's leadership, were actually learning and living and creating a great answering ideology. While harassed statesmen talked democracy, Buchman went around the world building it. While whole nations were being enslaved he worked and fought that whole nations be inspired. While the world piled up arms, he called and planned for moral and spiritual re-armament on as grand a scale. While many moaned that Christianity was failing, he brought to being a world-wide movement demonstrating the one embracing truth that Christianity works.

The spirit of these years is reflected in the preamble to the

Articles of Incorporation of Moral Re-Armament in the United States:

Riches, reputation or rest have been for none of us the motives of association.

Our learning has been the truth as revealed by the Holy Spirit.

Our security has been the riches of God in Christ Jesus.

Our unity as a world-wide family has been in the leadership of the Holy Spirit and our love for one another.

Our joy comes in our common battle for a change of heart to restore God to leadership.

Our aim has been the establishment of God's Kingdom here on earth in the hearts and wills of men and women everywhere, the building of a hate-free, fear-free, greed-free world.

Our reward has been in the fulfilment of God's Will.

War came, involving thousands of the men of Moral Re-Armament. While, like millions of others, they gave their sweat and blood on battlefield and lonely outpost, they could also give a further thing, the fruit of their unique training.

Meanwhile others fought steadily on the home front. Passions run high in wartime, often obscuring the true nature of world trends. Those who spent the war years with Frank Buchman can witness to the unerring penetration with which time and again he saw through the immediate crisis to the greater issues lying beyond. Evidence of this is in his speeches of the period. They reveal a deep conviction that, far beyond the outcome of the armed struggle, the fate of democracy depended on the full mobilisation of the moral and spiritual strength which is hers by right. Only so could democracy outstrip the ideologies of materialism (whether of Berlin or of Moscow) and, purified and inspired, give peace and longed-for security to the people of the world.

Moral Re-Armament emerged from the war stronger than ever. Not that adverse criticism had at this or at any other time

been lacking. How could it be otherwise? Frank Buchman's work had not only made complacent people uncomfortable, it had also flung a challenge to the forces of revolutionary materialism with their conscious and unconscious allies. No informed observer was surprised when the counter-attack came. A senior Army officer once analysed the type of opposition encountered by Moral Re-Armament. He noted that it drew fire equally from Nazis and Communists, from the extreme right and extreme left in politics, from aggressive atheists and narrow ecclesiastics. It had been charged with being both militaristic and pacifistic. Certain elements in labour denounced it as anti-union; certain elements in management as pro-union. "Nothing," this officer concluded, "but a potentially vast moral and spiritual reformation of global proportions could possibly be honoured by antagonisms so venomous and contradictory in character, and so world-wide in scope."

Frank Buchman, while he has never courted criticism, has never feared it. His answer has been that of Abraham Lincoln: "With firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in." He has believed that the only conclusive reply to criticism is the quality of his life's work; and that since at the bar of history both he and his critics will be judged by their fruits, he has no reason to fear. Being Spirit-led his work cannot be cut off from its sources of power. Being vitally Christian it has been everywhere irrepresible. Its past record can be left to speak for itself. What is more important now is to understand its strategic rôle in the vast struggle that lies ahead.

One of the interesting aspects of Frank Buchman's work is the way in which he has been inspired to create and use ever new forms and patterns in which to express his message. In the more leisured, spacious days of ten to twenty years ago, there was the "House Party"—an informal gathering of friends in a hotel or

college or large country house, where countless people who would never have darkened the door of a church found a practical, working faith in surroundings where they felt at home. Later there were the great national and world gatherings where many of the speeches in this book were delivered. In the crucial early war years there were round-table conferences, where men of management and labour met in a new atmosphere and often found a new approach to old, embittered problems. These led to the great world assemblies and ideological training centres at Mackinac Island in the State of Michigan and at Caux in Switzerland.

Most men tend inevitably to develop their work along the lines of the things they themselves can do well. Buchman's work develops along the lines of the things which he can inspire others to do better. He does not now make many speeches. He does not need to. All over the world through books, plays, films and other instruments, teams he has trained are winning men and nations to the answering ideology.

He speaks today to the youth of America through a group of teen-agers, boys and girls who have travelled with him across the length and breadth of the continent, who have written and produced their own play and their own film to answer the problems of their generation and show the new world their generation can create. In city after city they have been welcomed and supported by mayors and city councillors and educational authorities. With this backing they have brought their message to hundreds of schools, affecting the lives of whole communities.

These varied developments of Frank Buchman's work reveal a mind free from the trammels of convention and precedent, and a rare quality of self-effacing leadership. But there is something more—one constant element on which it all rests—a real, infectious and growing knowledge of the power of God. This is the essential equipment for anyone, be he teen-ager or octogenarian,

who takes his place beside Frank Buchman on the world-wide battlefield.

Countless lives have been lit on their way by occasional flashes of divine illumination. Many have followed a star. But for Frank Buchman it would be more truthful to say that the detailed, constant, accurate leading of God is as natural and powerful as daylight. It comes to him fresh every morning, like the sunrise—as welcome and as inevitable. No man would more readily admit that he is fallible, that he, like other men, can miss the way. He would claim nothing for himself that is not available to everyone. Yet no man, perhaps, in our generation has accepted so completely the guidance of God as the be-all and end-all of living, as the golden thread running through every day.

It might be claimed that by virtue of his personal achievement Frank Buchman had earned the right to speak to the men and women of today. But it is less by virtue of what he has done that he commands attention than by the burning relevance of what he has to say. For in these days powerful ideologies, many of them as seductive as they are false, are fighting a determined battle for the hearts and minds of men. They begin by affirming their belief in man and man alone. They end by despising and betraying him. They promise him liberty and give him regimentation. "Man is so great," they say, "that he can do without God." Soon man is so helpless that he cannot do without dictators. "Dispense with the ten commandments of God," they tell him. Soon he is saddled with the ten thousand commandments of men.

Into this confusion of half truths Frank Buchman comes with a message of trenchant simplicity, a message backed by a sensitive understanding of human nature and by an ever-relevant experience of the transforming power of Christ. The words he uses are for the most part simple words; it is the

language of every day. The truths he utters, too, are simple; but they are the truths by virtue of which the world may come to salvation and sanity in our lifetime or for lack of which our civilisation may perish for ever from the earth.