

# THE OXFORD GROUP HOUSE PARTY

Recently he had heard several Afrikaans songs composed during that war. They were all burdened with the theme of the suffering exile longing to return to the home he loved, and picturing simple and familiar objects with which he had grown up. There came into his mind the British songs composed during the same period, with a totally different martial and energetic spirit.

The one group of songs was that of the conquerer, the other of the defeated.

### DEEPER LESSONS

As he realised this, he understood that, although when he first met the Oxford Group, and since that time, he had thought he was completely released from all racial feeling, God had infinitely deeper lessons to teach him, and he now began to be capable of seeing things from the point of view of the Afrikaans-speaking people, and to understand something of their sufferings and of the agony endured by them when their land was overrun and devastated and families were scattered, separated, and broken, in many cases for ever, and to realise

the naturalness and inevitability of what anti-British sentiment existed.

As a result of this further experience, he now found it impossible to be roused to any antagonism or racial feeling by recent incidents, such as that relating to the National Anthem. He believed that the cure of racialism and race hatreds was a real experience of Christ, and what he had seen had shown him that when Paul wrote, "in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek," he was expressing something that he had seen with his own eyes, and that he was not theorising.

Mr. Price had seen precisely some such thing happen at a house party of the Oxford Group in Paris, where all Europe and much of the rest of the world was represented, and where from a state of division and separation there had emerged a unity, fellowship, and understanding that he had never witnessed in any other assembly, and which convinced him that here was the perfect answer to the world problem, and that there was no other solution.

### THE AFRIKANER

From the Afrikaans aspect, Mrs.

Janie Brink told of her embitterment against the British during the Anglo-Boer War. At the outbreak of the war she had been recalled from holiday to the Transvaal. Soon her father was wounded and taken prisoner, subsequently dying of his wounds. She had spent the next two years in a concentration camp. The sight of the little coffins of the children who had died in the camps being taken down to the graveyard bred in her a great love for her country. At the end of the war, having lost home and ideals and everything that they had been fighting for, she developed a great hatred for the English.

In later years, after her marriage, she taught her children to love God and their country and to hate everything English. Then she heard of the activities of the Oxford Group, and she thought that she had forgotten more religion than ever came out of Oxford. Four years ago she was invited to an Oxford Group meeting. To her great surprise, she met absolute honesty for the first time in her life, and after giving herself to God found a truly great peace and a new joy. Then came the great miracle in her life, all racialism and all prejudice dropped from her like a cast-off cloak. She still had a great love for her country and nation, but she now had a real love for South Africa. She felt that real patriotism lay in listening to God. To-day she was willing to give her life and her all to the "New Trek."

### CREATING A PROBLEM

Mr. Wynand Malan, a farmer of the Cape Province, told how he was converting his wine farm into a fruit farm, although it did not pay so well,

because God had shown him that he was contributing to a national problem by producing intoxicating drink. The testimony of other farmers from all parts of the Union powerfully reflected the growing realisation amongst the agricultural population of the country that the only solution to the native problem in this country can be found in the acceptance of stewardship of the natives by the employers of labour. Under the guidance of God the social and economic problems connected with the natives became purely moral problems, and as such were capable of solution.

Mr. I. Zuidmeer, a farmer from Paarl, threw an interesting light on how the solution of individual problems will bring about the solution of national problems. As a young man he had gone from success to success, and had become very swollen headed about them all. Eventually he had landed in the Grey Shirt movement and had had aspirations towards becoming a member of Parliament. The plan fell through and his success waned for a time, but soon he had another good job and registered more successes. He realised that he had to become changed in some way or other, and he came to the house party. There he captured the wonderful spirit and faced up to things and gave his life to God, even going to the extent of forgiving the man who had broken up his home and telling him how he too could be saved.

The attitude of a typical Britisher who had adapted himself to South African conditions was epitomised in the statement of the Rev. Bernard Chutter, of Michael House, Natal. He

said that he first came to South Africa with an Oxford Group team in 1930. Six months ago he came out again with his wife and family to settle. He had studied history and wondered what sort of reception he would receive from the Afrikaans-speaking people. Then it came to him and to his wife that they had to be absolutely honest in their motives in settling in South Africa. They were coming here for health and for livelihood, and then they realised that besides these two things they had to take one other—responsibility.

### LOYALTY

Then they had to face the question of loyalty—where their real treasure would be—in England or in South Africa, and they realised the things South Africa was going to give them, and that they must be prepared to see English culture being giving to produce South African culture and a South African nation.

Concluding the discussion, Dr. Norval said:—

"There is only one solution, that is to get back to God, back to reality, back to sanity. To see what is knawing at the roots of our national life. Sin is something crystallised in you and me. We realise that what is standing between us and God is rank sin.

"I imagined there was no room for God in the life where I was. I imagined my whole life was being dominated by rationalism, but it was being dominated by sin, and that sin stood between me and God. The moment I was prepared to face that sin, God became a reality to me, and the sin I had to face was that of hatred, jealousy, impurity of thought, selfishness, lack of love, self-will. The responsibility is rooted in God."

The speaker concluded with these telling words: "Let us face ourselves."