

# “For Sinners Only.”

The Romance of the Life-Changers.

“This is a book about sinners, for sinners, by quite a big sinner. You may not like it. You may even hate it, as some are sure to do. You may dislike the theme, for, though it introduces lovely people, it comes to grips with an unlovely subject. And solves its riddle.

“You may dislike the characters as they are limned in print, but not in real life. As they are all living, you may encounter them yourself one day, and discover their excellence. At least one will live on as an historic figure when this generation has merged with the ages. Perhaps many.

“Meanwhile, none can disprove the contents of this book or avoid its challenge. The story is true; the challenge is to you.”

Now, how can one resist reading a book which begins like that? And that lively style is kept up throughout. The book is entitled *For Sinners Only* (Hodder and Stoughton, 5/-), and it is written by Mr. A. J. Russell, a well-known Fleet Street journalist who for sometime was the literary editor of the *Daily Express*. He has an even livelier pen than the one Hugh Redwood uses with such skill. And what stories he has to tell! They are all about the Oxford Group Movement.

Sitting in church one Sunday evening Mr. Russell pricked up his journalistic ears on hearing a few complimentary words about a new Group. He visualised “Oxford’s New Religious Movement” with the columns of his paper wide open for the views of every Tom, Dick and Harry in the land.

The next day he began his quest. Very soon he had three of the Group leaders in his office for tea and a chat. The three were Garrett Stearly, John Roots and Charles Haines. They talked for two or three hours. A great impression was made upon the sensitive mind of the journalist.

A little later he met “the legendary Frank,” and went to a Group meeting. For a long time he felt that “the Group” were erecting far too formidable barriers in the way of potential Christians; and were turning a simple leisurely flat race into a mighty Grand National Steeplechase, with appalling fences, and sudden turns to negotiate, which only the courageous few dare attempt, and a tiny minority of them achieve.” But he changed his opinion about that when he knew more about the movement.

The genius of the movement, he now sees, “is that it seems to get at the fundamental problem, in every life and offers the real cure. It does not profess to cure human bodies, although human bodies have been cured through the Group message. But it gets at the root cause of the disordered life, removes it, and then joyfully observes that life straightening out into happy contentment irrespective of the size or character of the problem.”

And how this happy result is brought about Mr. Russell shows in a variety of extraordinary stories of transformed lives. The testimonies come from practically every stratum of society and from all parts of the world. And they are, as fascinating to read as they are inspiring in their effect. Rich tonic qualities has this book for those who

have fears about the success of the Gospel message in these days.

All over the world the Groups are spreading. Men and women who need changing join the company and share their experiences and bear their witness. “More and more it spreads and grows.”

“Nobody knows how many of the spiritual groups are in existence. There are no statistics. . . . The process of permeation is going on under the surface of life. The Churches are aware of the silent religious revolution which is being wrought. They are sympathetic. . . . The great renewal of the human spirit for which the world is waiting is gathering force secretly and silently. It may before long put new life into the dying forms of religion. It may do for the twentieth century what Wesley did for the eighteenth century.”

*For Sinners Only* is certainly the best exposition and interpretation of the Group Movement that has appeared. It has an inspiring message.