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DISCIPLINE

One of the speakers at a recent meeting of the Oxford Group in Ottawa at present, without any reference to penitentiary conditions, discussed this factor of self-discipline in an illuminating manner. Such discipline is something far deeper, far more vital, than the maintenance of order under the iron heel or the clenched fist. It is the discipline of one's own thinking, keeping watch over one's own tongue or pen, making orderly use of one's own time. . . . When self-discipline is thus brought into our own lives, according to the elementary but sure guidance of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes, there will be no grave problem of maintaining discipline in penitentiaries.

The thought may have occurred to government authorities in Ottawa that a visit by members of the Oxford Group to some Canadian penitentiaries, bringing the spirit of Christ to prison inmates where it is sorely needed, would do much to set up discipline on the surest foundation. We need to remind ourselves, however, even in putting forward this possible contribution to the solution of a new distressing problem in Canada, that self-discipline must precede the successful establishment of discipline in the community or the nation. Even in the institutions where unhappy inmates have forfeited the privileges of free citizenship, discipline can endure only when it is brought through agencies of self-discipline.