

## *Aug.* The Oxford Groups

To the Editor of THE BRITISH WEEKLY.

DEAR SIR,—May I add a postscript to Ilico's charming article on the Oxford Groups. A postscript, because six months ago I was making exactly the same statements myself. I then made the following discoveries:—(1) I was patronising not an organisation or a movement, but a quality of life, and a life that was infectious. I had not got such a quality of life, and mine was not infectious. Why?

(2) Here were people by no means "entirely innocent of theology." Names like the Vice-Principal of Wycliffe Hall (a triple first—beyond my wildest dreams) and Professor Grensted were the first shock. Then I discovered people, whom I snobbishly judged my intellectual inferiors, finding in St. Paul and St. John indispensable daily meat and drink. I did not find them indispensable. Again, Why?

(3) I was (and am) an avid reader of Eddington and Jeans. As Ilico suggests, I was not "permanently satisfied . . . with a purely esoteric doctrine of repentance and faith." It dawned on me that I was trying to take the abstract doctrine, without swallowing the pill of concrete repentance. "If any man will to do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

(4) The message, so far from being "impossible to put into intelligible terms," was only too uncomfortably intelligible: that I was a miserable sinner, a whited sepulchre of patronising intellectualism, who needed to come in humbly, like any and every one else, by the one strait gate.

And these four discoveries led to the following reflections:—

On "*Piñritanism*": my "culture" was a euphemism for "compromise." But here were artists of all sorts (notably organists) whose talents were consecrated to God and guided by Him.

On "*Casualties*": I had been head of my house at school. I was utterly unable to meet the needs of any single member of that house. During my headship certain boys were expelled, and many more remained defeated, to my knowledge, where I ought to have brought them to victory in the power of Christ. Where were the real casualties?

On "*Guidance*": I believed in the sufficiency of my human intellect. And there were no miracles. Here were people who believed in the sufficiency of the Holy Spirit, and His power to speak through the intellect wholly consecrated to the service of God. And the miraculous became the normal plane of Christian living. My pride was preventing God from being in my head and in my understanding.

On "*Sharing and Team Work*": I was asked, "Do you find that the people whose lives God used you to change last week are able to get on without sharing and team work?" That was a shock.

Six months ago I still had criticisms. *The practical question was how to make those criticisms constructive and effective.* Now, ought I to have said, "This movement should be a great source of thankfulness and encouragement to all Christian people . . . God-speed!" and left it at that? Or ought I to have surrendered my pride and my aloofness and given my whole self in full and unreserved fellowship with a disciplined army of old and young, rich and poor, united in the determination, at all costs, to have a maximum experience of Jesus Christ? Which? Where would I learn most, and, if I had anything to teach, teach most? What do you think?—I remain, Sir, your loyal servant,

DAVID GRAHAM,

Secretary, Oxford Union Society.