

Letters to the Editor

THE GROUP MOVEMENT

MORE IMPRESSIONS OF OBSERVERS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—Dr. Selbie criticizes the Group Movement for its comparative failure to influence the Christian Churches. In fairness one might ask whether the boot is not on the other leg. For what is the Group Movement? It is a religious movement that in a few short years has brought a new and vital experience of Christianity to numbers of people in England, Scotland, Canada, and South Africa. Admittedly, like all advancing forces, it has its limitations and its casualties. But in view of the positions already won, it is surely for the Church to welcome it with thankfulness.

Like all movements of the Spirit it is faced by misrepresentation and scorn. The group movement of the Waldenses was met by fierce ecclesiastical persecution; that of George Fox and the Quakers with imprisonment. John Wesley's movement, in certain ways similar to its modern successor, was countered, to their lasting shame, by the contempt of the majority of the clergy of his time. You have Bishop Lavington proving from the Eleusinian mysteries that Methodism was the work of some evil spirit, and Bishop Warburton warning everyone that Wesley was "a wily and malignant hypocrite"!

But are these days in which a living movement of the Spirit is to be deprecated? Unquestionably there has been a tendency in late years to secularize the whole range of life, as if religion were superannuated and the Church become a futility. At long last, in answer to the cry of many hearts, the Christianity of the New Testament is with us again. I have been to three Group house-parties. Of the four main principles of the Group I find their "quiet time," their acceptance of Divine "guidance," their emphasis on "surrender," to be both Apostolic and Catholic; while as to "sharing," who ever practised this more than the Apostle Paul himself? I have seen these Group principles at work in a large industrial town here in Lancashire, with good results evidenced in Confirmation. I have come across medical men, business men, naval and military officers, to say nothing of a large number of clergy, thankful for the new access of faith and courage they have thus derived.

I submit, with all respect to its critics, that here is a movement for the Church not to disparage, but to accept as one of God's best gifts to our age.

Yours faithfully,

H. G. WARRINGTON.

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