

"GROUPS" AND

"MOVEMENTS"

Star, Johannesburg.

It is curious that the centenary of the Oxford Movement should have found the university city the centre of a big religious rally of another movement which has appropriated the time-honoured name. This has provoked vigorous protests from Oxford itself, where it has been pointed out that Oxford has nothing to do with the "Oxford Groups" and was not even the scene of their creation.

Following an "International House Party" of the Group in that centre, held from June 30 to July 17, the mail brings many references thereto, and nothing more striking than an issue of the British Weekly which gives

the Group one of the biggest pieces of publicity it has ever had. The movement is of special interest to this country, for South Africa was the scene of its first intensive overseas campaign. In token, the British Weekly devotes one page among many to the South African developments. Professor Brookes, of Pretoria, says the Movement represents "the turning point" of his life. Mr. P. Rogers Cooke relates that "the Group Movement has taken very definite root in the life of Johannesburg," where he says there are fifteen groups meeting, with one or more in each of the principal towns along the Reef. Both he and Mr. Norman Price (an advocate of the South African Supreme Court) attribute to the Oxford Group Movement much of the credit for having brought about our political coalition. The Movement receives the blessing of Bishop Carey, of Bloemfontein, of Dr. A. J. van der Merwe, of the Groote Kerk, Capetown, and Dr. Macmillan, of Pretoria, former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa. It is shown in its now almost world-wide scope, the support being quoted of bishops and other distinguished members of the clergy, and a special reference to recent team-work through the United States and Canada is rounded off with an opinion from Mr. Bennett, the Canadian Prime Minister, that the influence so powerfully represented "is the only one that can save the world."

It is at least a tribute to the attention excited by this movement that there should come to hand, in its fourth edition, a book entitled "The Oxford Movement: Is it of God or of Satan?" by J. C. Brown (Pickering and Inglis). The history of the Movement during its first 20 years is outlined, until in 1928, we are told, its founder, Dr. Buchman, "led a team from Oxford to South Africa, and it was there that the name 'Oxford Group Movement' was first given." It appears that the author of this small book travelled to and from South Africa with "teams" of the Oxford Group, and that his deliberate opinion of the Movement is that it is of "Satanic origin and inspiration." All popular movements have their critics, but the criticism is not usually so violent and crude as the above.