

acute 'in the dictator states with their militant mass consciousness and their ideological fanaticism,' in the capitalist democracies there is the same problem as to 'how it is possible to reconcile spiritual freedom and personal responsibility with the mechanised existence of a unit in the economic machine The essential problem is how to transform the mechanised dehumanised mass population of an industrialised State into a true community with a common ethos and a common faith.' The Christian is duly warned again a 'moral rearmament' misconception of the function of religion, against the temptations to alliances with the forces of Right or Left totalitarianism, against adopting a purely negative attitude to these movements, and above all against offering Christianity itself as a political utopia which can challenge them on their own ground. What he is to do is made by no means so clear—perhaps inevitably, but none the less regrettably. It would be a pity if he were to interpret Dawson's 'culture' in too narrow and academic a sense, or his summons 'beyond politics' as a summons to neglect politics. But though it provides us with little in the way of a definite policy, *Christianity and Politics*, the last chapter of the book, outlines the Christian view of history and catastrophe with a lucidity and deftness of touch that makes us wish that it could be issued in pamphlet form and scattered broadcast.

Such summary diagnosis of recent history as this book offers inevitably lays itself open to criticism on the grounds of over-sweeping generalisation. Marx's conception of economics as the determining factor of historical development is perhaps too readily dismissed as entirely out-of-date. But by those who can value generalisations as generalisations, the first-rate importance of Dawson's diagnosis will not be missed.

VICTOR WHITE, O.P.

PSYCHOLOGY

MORAL PROBLEMS OF MENTAL DEFECT. By J. S. Cammack, S.J. (Burns Oates; 7s. 6d.)

The nature of these problems and the questions they raise are well illustrated by the case of the boy 'Tarzan' to whom the reader is introduced in the opening chapter of Fr. Cammack's informative study. 'Tarzan' is a mental defective who by reason of his incorrigibly bad conduct and criminal propensities was reported 'as being a Moral Defective of the most dangerous type; and one who does not appear to recognise the existence of any moral principles.' It was found necessary to send him to a State Institution,

Whilst, happily to say, all mental defectives do not display characteristics of this kind, some do, and the case quoted is a type of the legal, moral and administrative problems set by one whose mental and moral life appear quite abnormal. How is such a person to be judged and what treatment should he receive? The latter question can be answered administratively by his permanent segregation, but the further question of his moral responsibility is another matter. This can only be estimated by the extent to which his freedom of action is limited by factors over which he has no or little control, for 'responsibility,' it is pointed out, 'is bound up with freedom and imputation of praise or blame is proportionate to the measure of the agent's freedom of choice.'

The treatment of the problems arising out of mental deficiency and delinquency found in the usual textbooks of moral theology needs, in the author's opinion, to be revised in the light of the new psychology and psychiatry, together with the advances made in the study of heredity in relation to mental defect. The purpose therefore of this thesis, Fr. Cammack states, is 'to offer some material to remedy the deficiencies by collecting the facts ascertained by the best modern investigations of the subject of heredity, moral imbecility and moral defect.'

The question turns on the degree of subjective moral responsibility in both the mental and moral defective; on which point the author declares the text books are not very helpful. In order to set the problem of moral responsibility in a clearer light Fr. Cammack expounds the notion and the development of the doctrine of moral responsibility; and he establishes the principle that 'any factor not deliberately introduced by the agent, which destroys or lessens intellectual advertence destroys or lessens his responsibility.' Mental defect which is a condition of arrested development of mental powers is one of these factors; so also is heredity in the sense that hereditary dispositions and tendencies can and do constitute an obstacle to the completely free human act.

Our notions of heredity have, however, undergone some change of late years which seem to have escaped the authors of textbooks, who are inclined to accept facts which are inaccurate. The moralist has to safeguard the principles of moral responsibility from the objections of criminologists and others who deny any kind of freedom of the will, particularly in the moral defective.

The evidence in support of heredity was partly based on cer-

tain family pedigrees of mental defectives and delinquents such as the Jukes, Nams and the 'Kallikak' families. The evidence derived from these investigations is now generally discredited. Recent and more accurate investigations of family histories tend to show that heredity, though an important factor, does not play such an extensive part in the causation of mental and moral defect as was formerly supposed. This, of course, has an important bearing on the question of sterilisation. Fr. Cammack marshalls the evidence, submitting it to criticism, supported by the leading authorities on the subject.

Turning to the subject of moral imbecility, it is shown that this term is used ambiguously. One writer quoted states that: 'The moral imbecile is born without moral sense; and lack of ethical feeling and lack of consideration for others make him a very dangerous member of the community.' It comes, therefore, as something of a shock to find the same terms moral imbecility or moral insanity used by Catholic authorities. As the author points out, this notion of moral imbecility as an in-born lack of moral sense can be generally traced to a discarded philosophical theory which assumed a moral sense in man distinct from his other intellectual faculties. This, of course, is quite different from the supposition that some forms of delinquency or immoral conduct may be traceable to hereditary conditions; which does not of necessity imply a complete inborn lack of 'moral sense.' Delinquency in many cases is due to external environmental conditions as well as to internal psychological factors which supervene not infrequently in an individual at certain periods of his life such as adolescence, who previously was well conducted. On the other hand, we meet with individuals, whether mentally defective or normal, who from an early age exhibit abnormal disorder of conduct; and these may have to be dealt with administratively and classed as moral defectives—a term which may be taken merely in the sense of a defective who is also immoral or a moral defective. There is no need, however, to label such an individual as a moral imbecile in the sense already mentioned, namely, as one in whom a lack of moral sense is inborn.

The bearing of this discussion of the meaning of the term moral imbecility on the problem of moral responsibility needs no further emphasis. In regard to the further question of the psychological basis of delinquency, support, with certain reservations and amplifications, is given to Dr. Burt's theory of the temperamental defective in preference to explanations derived from psychological theories of the unconscious,

Fr. Cammack is to be congratulated and thanked for his masterly exposition of the problems at issue. His treatise meets a pressing need for a clearer view of the subject of mental and moral defect in relation to moral responsibility. A useful bibliography, index and glossary of technical terms completes this interesting volume.

AIDAN ELLINGTON, O.P.

NOS ENFANTS ET NOUS. Par Dr. Etienne De Greeff. (Brussels : Editions de la Cité Chrétienne; B.frs. 16.50.)

In the midst of so much that is written and said on the psychology of children it is refreshing to meet an essay which handles this intricate and delicate subject from a standpoint which is at once Christian and scientific.

When one approaches the problem of the formation of the man, the most striking thing is the irreplaceable rôle of the normal familial environment, father and mothers, brothers and sisters. This rôle does not show itself directly, but one sees the consequences of its absence; for instance, in cases of children brought up from infancy in institutions, or even by grandparents or other relatives.

The key to the author's treatment of child psychology as presented in this interesting volume is to be found in the foregoing observation, for the child is not just an abstract entity to be studied psychologically apart from the environment into which it is born. Although indeed it has its individual potentialities, he is an integral part of a greater unit, to wit the family, and its particular social environment.

In the interplay of native disposition and environmental influences lies the complexity of the problem of the development of the infant into the adult and its ultimate adaptation to life.

The author agrees with the findings of psychoanalysts that the fundamental scheme of the personality is achieved towards the fifth year of age, by which time a truly conscious life is formed in the child, bearing with it, however rudimentary it may be, a personal conception of things. Henceforth, he finds himself in conscious conflict with his surroundings, and a whole organization exists in him which deforms his vision and comprehension of the world according to certain fundamental complexes. This is not to be understood to imply as of necessity anything of a pathological quality at the very outset. A 'complex' may be quite normal but out of keeping with reality. In the early stages of its development the child forms ideas about itself, of the world around and of its attitude thereto which un-