

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-

der the impact of its intellectual growth on the one hand and of its environment on the other undergoes a certain deformation to which it has in due course to adjust itself. It is only when the adjustment is faulty or inadequate that the complexes may develop along pathological lines.

The main purpose of this study lies in pointing out the paths along which this development lies and the pitfalls that may be encountered on the way.

Though development is continuous it falls naturally onto certain well-marked stages, beginning with infancy, with its characteristic quality of dependence on the family and surroundings to the gradual emergence of personal ambition and effort towards independence and domination to the final achievement of a definite adult psychological and moral attitude to the world. This, however, is not the whole of the problem, for in the Christian family the child comes into contact with religion and with God, especially at the period of the school and catechism. Tracing the development and quality of religious and moral notions forming in the child's mind the author points out the danger, only too real, of an inferior teaching of Catholicism, as, for instance, presenting God in such theoretic and unintelligible terms that it turns to lesser deities and holds a form of religion which in fact scarcely goes beyond a rudimentary polytheism.

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NOTICES

THE CONFERENCES OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL TO THE SISTERS OF CHARITY. Vols. I and II. Translated by Joseph Leonard, C.M. (Burns Oates; 10s. 6d. each.)

The words of the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission with reference to the publication of the 'Correspondence' of St. Vincent de Paul, are surely equally true with regard to these Conferences. He says that the object in publishing the letters is 'to make this hero of charity better known, for he is more generally praised than known, and to attain your goal with greater certainty, you preferred, by allowing him to give utterance to his own thoughts, feelings, aspirations and designs, to present us with a faithful portrait painted by himself.' In his conferences as in his letters, we can see the real man and the real saint revealed. This is all the more true since these are not studied and artificial discourses, but simple, familiar and intimate talks. A spiritual Father conversing with