

Religion and Medicine. Edited by M. A. H. MELINSKY. S. C. M. 1970. Pp. 145. Price £1.25.

Although Medicine is part of the title, these collected essays really discuss psychological themes such as growth, anxiety, authority and human relations, particularly in the hospital community. Perhaps no subject other than psychiatry and the psychological sciences is nearer or more relevant to the longing for self-understanding, personal growth and wholeness, once served by the teachings of religion. These essays, written by a group of well-known thinkers and workers under the auspices of the Institute of Religion and Medicine in both professions, attempt to examine both the common good and the different approaches which of the two frames of reference. Inevitably the book as a whole suffers from the fragmentation of themes, but all the contributions are of high standard and illustrate contemporary trends and approaches, particularly of the Protestant tradition to such matters as faith, sin, guilt and conversion, interpreted against the background of psychological factors in the personality.

J. DOMINIAN.

Man for Himself: an Enquiry into the Psychology of Ethics. By ERICH FROMM. Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1971. Pp. 245. Price 90p.

This is a reprint in paperback form of a book first published in 1949. The eminent author has a well-earned reputation for thoughtful analyses of the nature of Man and Society.

In this book his expressed intention is 'to reaffirm the validity of humanistic ethics'. Not surprisingly, he is critical of ethical systems based on irrational authority, including most religions, which in his view foster dependence and inadequacy in those submitting to them. In contrast, humanistic ethics are anthropocentric. 'Good is the affirmation of life, the unfolding of man's powers. Virtue is responsibility towards his own existence. Evil constitutes the crippling of man's powers. Vice is irresponsibility towards himself.'

The discussion covers a wide range of subjects, including the nature of conscience, faith, pleasure and happiness and moral powers in Man. The author envisages character as an infinitely variable blend of different orientations, the productive orientation or ability to utilize inherent potentialities and four non-productive orientations, receptive (submissive, masochistic), exploitative (manipulative, domineering), hoarding (remote, rigid) and marketing (role-playing). Decisions are determined by character, but actions can be judged against objective criteria.

Understanding does not mean condoning. For the author ethical problems cannot be divorced from therapy, for 'neurosis is, in the last analysis, a symptom of moral failure'.

Whatever one's view about humanism, one must admire the author's optimistic, if not romantic, belief in human potential. One suspects, however, that inadequate, immature and unsophisticated Man will continue to prefer the security of authoritarian systems. The writing is erudite, lucid and never dull. Vintage Fromm at low cost—what better recommendation?

K. DAVISON.

CHILDHOOD

The Development of the Concept of Space in the Child. By M. LAURENDEAU and A. PINARD. New York: International Universities Press. 1970. Pp. ix + 465. \$12.50.

The work of J. Piaget over the past 40 years has added enormously to our understanding of the nature of mental development in children from birth to adolescence, and in showing how they progress from early sensory-motor behaviour to rational thinking. Since, however, his methods of investigation tend to be unduly informal and subjective, it is particularly useful to have repetitions by other investigators under better controlled conditions; and this book by two French-Canadian psychologists is an outstanding example. It is based on the application of five of Piaget's tests of spatial judgement to some 700 children individually, who constituted a representative sample of boys and girls aged two to twelve years. The results are analysed in such detail, and in such technical terms, as to make the book somewhat difficult to read. However it generally confirms Piaget's accounts of the crude 'topological' egocentric nature of young children's spatial perception, and the eventual emergence of an objective, 'Euclidian' conception of spatial relations.

P. E. VERNON.

A Neuropsychiatric Study in Childhood. By MICHAEL RUTTER, PHILIP GRAHAM, WILLIAM YULE. London: Heinemann Medical Books, for Spastics International Medical Publications. Pp. 271. Price £3.75.

Bold is the physician who leaves the safe havens of general medicine for the less well charted waters of psychiatry, a prey to clutching at superstitions and half truths. One doubts whether any child psychiatrist would accept an electrician's suggestion that their radio was suffering from 'wireless damage'—