

Dr Comfort's book is an essay in the sociology of modern urban society and centralised government, and its aim is similar. Delinquency in high places is its theme, and it seeks to relate delinquency in government to delinquency in society as a whole, in the hope of establishing that modern government, democratic no less than totalitarian, has a particular attraction for psychopathic individuals.

The result is inconclusive. Certainly we find the 'aggressive ego-centric' in political office, but he might quite as readily be discovered in business or at the Bar. Again, the work of a propaganda ministry is no doubt agreeable to a 'fantasy-delinquent', but he must be equally at home in the world of cheap fiction or journalism. Nor is there much difference between electioneering and salesmanship. The fringes of government, that uncertain land of 'contacts' and 'fiddling', has perhaps more to offer.

Dr Comfort is driven to sober conclusions. In respect of governments, people usually get no worse than they deserve. Emphasis upon defects of government diverts attention from the central issue of all political thinking, the good life in the good society. By focussing his resentment upon the meaningless 'them' of those in office, a man attempts, as Dr Comfort puts it, to externalise his conscience. His book illustrates the ease with which a false institutional problem may be substituted for the real human predicament.

Delinquency, I have said, is the author's subject, and by delinquency he means conduct which from the standpoint of the investigator appears antisocial. Like all scientific enquiries of its kind, his book achieves its emancipation from all transcendental standards at a high price. No argument, save that of utility, can be advanced in favour of any course of action. Conduct is analysed in terms of 'adjustment' 'maladjustment', 'cultural conditioning', 'environmental factors' and so on.

This book is clearly and vigorously written. Sometimes, it is true, in an attempt to be precise, Dr Comfort merely achieves a solemn redundancy; for example he talks of 'historical certainty' where 'certainty' would do quite well, and of 'biological growth' where no other kind of growth is conceivable. But he succeeds in holding the attention, and, in the accomplishment of his attack upon a most difficult subject, gives cause for optimism regarding the efforts of social psychology.

J. JONES.

**DARWIN IS NOT FOR CHILDREN.** By Vera Barclay. (Herbert Jenkins; 9s. 6d.)

Miss Barclay is a convert. '...I believed in Darwinism and thought it quite compatible with religion' and then 'I ceased to believe in

Evolution for what I must call common-sense reasons, since I am not a scientist'. She meant to write a strictly reasonable and scientific treatise but wrote in fact an 'Apologia' for 'belief', a word she constantly uses with reference to scientific theories. She holds Evolution to be important because of its wide influence and misuse, and this would seem to some extent confirmed by the Pope specifically discussing it in *Humani Generis*, where he says, while safeguarding revealed truth: 'In the present state of scientific and theological opinion this question may legitimately be canvassed by research and by discussion between experts on both sides. At the same time, the reasons for and against both views must be weighed and adjudged with all seriousness, fairness and restraint'. This provides a standard of judgement.

Miss Barclay started, self-confessedly, from scratch fairly recently with no scientific background and little natural inclination towards such studies. Her data derives exclusively from her undoubtedly wide reading (testified to by continuous quotation and a sixty-page appendix of additional citations) and is confined to what supports her own view, namely that the theory of evolution is untenable. Much that she says is interesting and instructive, but on the whole one feels overwhelmed by a mass of partly assimilated, unintegrated information, obscuring the argument, containing contradictions and loose arguments and shewing, at times, an arrogant and unjust attitude to her opponents. The reader is referred to the early rejection of natural selection, the struggle for existence and the idea of adaptation, and the subsequent use of these ideas, without further clear definition, in the discussion of alternative theories: to the change in front, between earlier and later chapters, over the relationship she holds to have obtained between Adam and other early men: to imputations with regard to Maeterlinck's alleged use of Marais' thought. These instances could be multiplied. A comparison between the relevant parts of this book and Fr Johnson's *The Bible and the Early History of Mankind* illustrates her lack of assimilation, her rather superficial approach and apparent unawareness of other important facts and opinions. The alternative theory she adumbrates is not convincing and is at times unorthodox, as when she says God used existing material in creating. MARY BEAUMONT.

THE IDEA OF USURY. By Benjamin N. Nelson. (Princeton University Press, London: Geoffrey Cumberlege; 20s.)

The practice of Usury, in the sense of unconscionable bargains by moneylenders, has been universally condemned since money was first known. The commandment in Deuteronomy permitting profitable loans to strangers, but protecting brothers, has long been the subject