

## REVIEWS

### PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

LA METHODE PSYCHANALYTIQUE ET LA DOCTRINE FREUDIENNE.  
By Roland Dalbiez. (2 vols.) (Desclée de Brouwer; 100 frs.)

M. Dalbiez has undertaken the difficult but much needed task of discussing the methods and doctrines of psycho-analysis as contained in the writings of Dr. Sigmund Freud. This he has done from the standpoint of a philosophy which is in keeping with the mind of St. Thomas. To philosophical criticism he adds the results of personal experience derived from psycho-analytic investigations of his own carried out during a number of years.

Approaching the subject, the author declares that, from the side of philosophy, it was not long before he discovered that philosophy alone is insufficient to resolve the new problems set by psycho-analysis, and that before discussing the assertions of Freud it was necessary to begin by reconstituting the same experiences.

Together with this he has endeavoured to sift with the aid of philosophical criteria the theoretical concepts which Freud employs, esteeming that, in what concerns human knowledge, if nothing begins without experience nothing is achieved by it alone.

Pursuing the dual path of observation and reflexion it is seen that in psycho-analysis one has to distinguish a method, a psychology and a philosophy. The failure on the part of many exponents and critics of this subject to keep these distinctions clearly in view has led to much confusion of thought and endless controversies.

The author has therefore divided his study in two parts, in the first of which will be found an exposition of psycho-analysis presented in as favourable a light as possible, to do justice to its principal author. Only too frequently, it is observed, a travesty of Freudian teaching is presented, and this substitute-doctrine is then set up for discussion and criticism. Commencing with the psychopathology of everyday life, he goes on to review in turn the subject of dreams, Freud's sexual theory, the theory of the neuroses and psychoses, ending with Sublimation, Art and Religion.

The second part is devoted to discussion of the methods and theories of psycho-analysis.

The author has throughout endeavoured to maintain an attitude of strict impartiality, and to give as accurate an account of Freudian teaching as possible. In this he has succeeded in making clear much that is obscure; for, as he remarks on many occasions, a great deal of the prevailing misunderstanding of psycho-analysis is in no small measure due to the obscurity of Freud's exposition of his own views as well as to a certain indifference to furnishing

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convincing proofs of his assertions. The first volume is therefore a valuable commentary on Freudian doctrine.

Since no summary of these volumes can possibly do justice to their contents we can here only briefly comment on certain points which the author himself considers to be fundamental. The first place is taken by the doctrine of the unconscious, which together with that of dreams is the centre of psycho-analysis. In fact it is this doctrine, even more than the sexual theories of Freud, which has aroused the most opposition, especially from the adherents of radical empiricism and idealist philosophy. The unconscious, it is maintained, is not only an essential concept for psycho-analysis but also for psychology; without it there cannot even be a psychology. M. Dalbiez has his own views as to the nature of the psychical unconscious, with which he compares the views of Freud, finding indeed many points of agreement, as well as much with which he disagrees. Ultimately the discussion revolves round his own philosophical point of view, which is that of a moderate realism in keeping with St. Thomas. Freud does not profess any definite system of philosophy, and moreover is not primarily concerned with metaphysical questions, but there is nevertheless a certain philosophical outlook implicit in his writings which tends to oscillate between radical empiricism and rationalism. To this is mainly due the attitude the Viennese psychiatrist has taken up in regard to such matters as morality, free-will and religion. As far as psycho-analysis, considered as a method, is concerned, it moves, says M. Dalbiez, on the plane of scientific determinism. Psychical events must have at least some psychical factor in their causation, and cannot be completely interpreted or explained by physiological causes, however much the latter may contribute a share. To the radical empiricist such a view is untenable. The Cartesian dualist will also find himself in great difficulty in attempting to interpret many of the phenomena discovered by Freud. Realism is a much better philosophical instrument, for it does afford an intelligible explanation of the unity of the human ego which is sedulously upheld by Freud. The philosophy implicit in Freud's teaching tends, according to M. Dalbiez, to a certain degree of realism, however empirical he may be in other respects. He believes indeed that Freud is not far from asserting a psychical principle of life.

With regard to the question of free-will the author makes it quite clear that theoretically Freud is led by his empiricism to a denial of will and intellect, though he is not entirely consistent. Not pretending to take up any definite metaphysical standpoint, he looks only at the facts as he finds them, and so is led to a determinist attitude. It is precisely in such questions as this that the distinction drawn between the methodology of psycho-

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analysis itself and the particular theories of Freud is so important. As a method psycho-analysis aims solely at the restoration of the patient's capacity to use his reason and will in a more adequate way, to free him from those internal inhibitions and conflicts which are the source of his troubles. The denial of free-will is not derived directly from the psycho-analytic method but indirectly from philosophical empiricism. "The fundamental problems of the human mind remain after psycho-analysis what they were before."

One great feature of this important treatise is the way in which the author tracks to their sources the errors in Freudian doctrines when these are considered in the light of Catholic philosophy. Psycho-analysis is not therefore to be condemned outright, for in pointing out what must be looked upon as false, there remains much which is essentially true philosophically as well as psychologically. We can but hope that this very inadequate notice may draw the attention of philosophers as well as medical psychologists to the vast and intricate problems of the human psyche which have been unveiled by the painstaking investigations of Dr. Freud and his able exponent Dr. Dalbiez.

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### CATHOLICS AND COMMUNISM

COMMUNISTES ET CATHOLIQUES. By Marc Scherer. (Editions du Cerf, Juvisy; 5 frs.)

The occasion of this book is the recent abandonment by Communists in France of open opposition to Catholicism, and their now frequently expressed desire for co-operation with various Catholic organizations. In other words, the French Communists offer to establish with the Catholics a "Common Front" to pursue certain aims that are presented as being the natural objects of both Communist and Catholic action, for example against Fascism (or Nazism) or war.

What is to be the attitude of the Catholics of France to these suggestions of co-operation? M. Scherer sets out to examine the problem rationally, to show that such co-operation is impossible, not merely because the Church has condemned Communism, but because of the intrinsic repugnance of the ultimate purpose of Communism and Catholicism. He shows in the first place the irreconcilable difference that lies between Communism based on an absolute materialism with its consequent denial of religion, and Catholicism seeking to establish and maintain the Kingdom of God on earth. He points out also that, though he will not labour the question of sincerity, there is reason to believe that these offers of the Communists are not above suspicion of ulterior motives (at least among their leaders), of not merely seeking to