

NEW BOOKS

Matter, Mind, and Meaning. By W. WHATELY CARINGTON. With a preface by Professor H. H. Price. (Methuen. Pp. xx + 257.)

The death, on March 2nd, 1947, of Mr. Whately Carington, was a severe loss to the S.P.R., of which he had been a most active member for some thirty years, and a heavy blow to the young and struggling science of psychical research, to which he had made very valuable contributions, both theoretical and practical. Up to the last few months of his life, when he became incapacitated through illness, he was engaged in writing a book on philosophy, entitled *Matter, Mind, and Meaning*, to which he attached great importance. At the time when further work on it had ceased to be possible he had completed about two-thirds of it. After his death the manuscript passed into the hands of Professor H. H. Price, who has prepared it for the press and provided a most interesting preface and occasional footnotes.

Professor Price says that the first five chapters were almost complete in their final form. These are entitled "Outline of the Discussion," "The Failure of Metaphysics," "Meaning," "Matter," and "Mind." The main body of the book now ends with the sixth chapter, entitled "Mind and Matter." Of this there existed only two very brief alternative versions, which Professor Price has tried to conflate. The editor has added, from papers left by the author, three Appendices, entitled "Don't Shoot the Philosophers—yet!," "Life after Death, the need for an Inversion of Thought," and "Does Tomorrow Exist?"

It should be remembered that Whately Carington had published a few years earlier a very interesting book entitled *Telepathy*, in which he put forward, and tried to support by experimental evidence, what might be called the "Association Theory" of telepathy. The theory may be stated as follows. The ordinary account of revival of an associated idea is this. If the ideas of X and of Y have become associated in the mind of M, then, if an idea of X or of something like X should recur in M, there is a tendency for an idea of Y or of something like Y to recur in M. Whately Carington's proposed extension is this. If the ideas of X and Y have become associated in the mind of M, then, if an idea of X or of something like X should occur in *any other mind N*, there is a tendency for an idea of Y or of something like Y to occur in N. To put it shortly, association between two ideas in *any* one mind tends to bring about the occurrence of one of them in *any* mind in which the other occurs. The theory of mind which is proposed in the present book makes this supposition of the widespread effects of an association of ideas in any one mind plausible instead of paradoxical.

Whately Carington's final philosophical position is a form of neutral monism. Minds and matter consist of the same kind of constituents, viz. *sensa* (extra-somatic and intra-somatic) and images, arranged in characteristically different ways. His explicit ground for this view is that it is necessitated by the doctrine, which he accepts and insists upon, that every intelligible sentence which is not tautologous must be in principle verifiable or refutable by sensation or introspection.

I do not think that Whately Carington's theory of neutral monism, or the positivistic account of meaning and the consequent scornful rejection of "metaphysics" which lead up to it, are of any great interest or importance as original contributions to philosophy. He fully admits his indebtedness to

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Earl Russell in regard to the former, and to Messrs. Ogden and Richards and Professor Ayer in regard to the latter. The main value which I can ascribe to this part of the book is as a lively popular introduction to the weightier and more technical work of these writers.

What gives to this book such interest and originality as it possesses is the fact that Whately Carington had an expert knowledge of psychical research, and recognized that it has established results which philosophy can ignore only at its peril; whilst Earl Russell and Professor Ayer (in common with the vast majority of western philosophers) have never shown the least sign of interest in, or acquaintance with, the results, nor realized that they constitute a challenge to philosophers. Whately Carington tries to show that the occurrence of telepathy and clairvoyance can be fitted fairly easily into a neutral monist theory of matter and mind; and he maintains that their existence presents extreme difficulties to other theories. It is to be presumed that he intended also to show that well attested paranormal *physical* phenomena, both sporadic and experimental, fit easily into the neutral monist picture. This, as Professor Price points out, he did not live to accomplish. Price himself makes two very bold and interesting alternative suggestions in his prefatory essay. Indeed I must confess that I found the preface and the notes rather more interesting than the book.

In conclusion I would make the following comments. (1) There is a great deal of talk in the book about "consciousness," in the abstract, and we are told that whenever two or more *cognita* are interconnected there is "consciousness." This leaves me completely unilluminated. I naturally ask: Consciousness *by whom* and *of what*? Suppose, e.g. that a number of visual *sensa* form a single visual field, as happens, e.g. if I look up at a blue sky with white clouds floating about. No one using words in their ordinary senses would say that the white-looking *sensa* are "aware of" or "conscious of" each other or of the blue-looking *sensa*; nor would he say that the blue-looking *sensa* are "aware of" or "conscious of" the white-looking ones. What could intelligibly be said is that *I* am conscious of the field containing all these *sensa*, and that *I* discriminate the white ones from the blue background. I am not saying that this statement involves a "Pure Ego" or anything that Whately Carington might object to as "metaphysical." I am saying that his own vague and abstract statements about "consciousness" seem to lead to such absurdities as I have indicated above.

(2) Whately Carington writes as if there were no alternatives between neutral monism and a Pure Ego theory of the mind, which he rejects as meaningless. Even Professor Price writes as if the Pure Ego theory and the Cartesian theory of mind and body were current, and were responsible for the fact that most philosophers ignore or reject the well established results of psychical research. But surely one might hold some form of "bundle theory" of the mind without being committed to neutral monism; surely very few contemporary philosophers do in fact hold the Pure Ego theory; and surely most philosophers are aware (though perhaps they do not always lay enough stress upon) the facts of multiple and alternating personality.

(3) Even if one did hold a Pure Ego theory of the mind, it would still be a quite contingent fact that each human body has one and only one mind animating it, and that the mind which animates a human body can *directly* affect only the brain and nervous system of *that* body. Conversely, if one held a bundle-theory or even a neutral monist theory of the mind, the facts which have led to the view that each mind can directly affect only the brain and nervous system of *a certain one* correlated organism would be what they now are. Thus, it is not clear to me that a Pure Ego theory of the mind should

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make one *specially* disinclined to accept evidence for telekinesis, or that a neutral monist theory should make one *more* inclined to accept it.

I have noticed a large number of misprints in the book. P. 107, l. 12, omit *as*; p. 108, last line but one, for *on* read *of*; p. 112, last line but two, for *that* read *than*; p. 126, l. 21, for *sufferent* read *suffered*; p. 184, eighth line from the bottom, for *exclude* read (I think) *include*; p. 200, Note 1, l. 3, for *untra* read *ultra*; p. 202, line seven from bottom, for *if* read *of*; p. 225, Note 1, l. 5, for *apents* read *agents*. There are probably other misprints which I have overlooked.

C. D. BROAD.

F. H. Bradley. By W. F. LOFTHOUSE. (Philosophers' Library, No. 1. Epworth Press. 1949. Pp. viii + 273. Price 10s. 6d.)

Even those who are unsympathetic to Bradley's positive doctrines will grant that he was one of the most powerful, acute and effective critics in the history of English philosophy. If he is little read to-day by the younger generation of philosophers, it is safe to say that targets of his criticism, like Bain and Mansel, are read more seldom still. Perhaps it is the very excellence of his distinctive criticism which has stood in the way of the acceptance, or even the study, of his more constructive work. Too many readers of *Appearance and Reality* have stopped half-way; they have allowed themselves to be convinced by a dialectic which reduces a rose to a cluster of qualities and relations, or the self to "a bundle of discrepancies," or the essence of goodness to approbation, and then have relapsed into a positivism which Bradley is unfortunately no longer here to destroy.

Dr. Lofthouse is not one of these. He was an undergraduate when *Appearance and Reality* was published; it seems safe to guess that he fell in love with it at once and that what he now gives us is the fruit of a life-time's reflection on all that Bradley ever published. He has undertaken the hard task of summarizing Bradley's main contentions and criticizing them for the benefit of those "who will probably care more about their hold on their faith than about any philosophical system." Although a cordial welcome must be given to a book which attempts to do justice to Bradley and to bring him out of undeserved neglect, it must be doubtful if a summary of this kind can be readily intelligible to those unacquainted with the original works or if it can adequately convey the flavour of Bradley's argument in all its richness and ingenuity.

Like other admirers of Bradley, Dr. Lofthouse is dissatisfied with the account of the Absolute in which *Appearance and Reality* culminates; and he tries to show that Bradley's argument ought to have led him to Christian theism. Is this not to be guilty of the common fault of fathering our own convictions on our favourite authors? It is one thing to argue that some of Bradley's doctrines can be used as a philosophical framework for Christian theology; quite another to claim that Bradley ought to have occupied ground which he specifically abandoned.

T. M. KNOX.

Democracy and the Quaker Method. By F. E. POLLARD, BEATRICE E. POLLARD and R. S. W. POLLARD. (London: The Barnesdale Press. Pp. 160. Price 8s. 6d.)

The authors of this unpretentious study are members of the Society of Friends, and their theme is the significance for political theory and practice