

V.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell. [Library of Living Philosophers, Vol. V.] Edited by PAUL ARTHUR SCHILPP. Evanston and Chicago: Northwestern University, 1944. Pp. xv + 815. \$4.00.

IT is not easy to write a satisfactory review of any of the immense volumes in this series. Each consists mainly of a number of essays about various aspects of the work of a single distinguished living (though sometimes moribund) philosopher, written independently of each other by as many writers. These are preceded by a short autobiography of the philosopher concerned, and followed (if he has survived and is still capable of writing) by an article in which he deals with certain points raised by the various essayists. Fortunately in the present case there can be no question about the continued existence and the amazing vitality of the hero of the volume.

The points which interested me most in Lord Russell's sketch of his mental development are the following. He tells us that John Stuart Mill was 'so far as is possible in a non-religious sense' his godfather. He speaks of the great influence which his grandmother, widow of the first Earl Russell and a member of the Scottish border-family of Elliot, had on him. She was a strongly religious unworldly woman of the world, plainly one of the 'salt of the earth'. Two texts, which she wrote on the fly-leaf of the bible which she gave to Lord Russell when he was twelve years old, have, he says, profoundly influenced his life 'and still seemed to retain some meaning after I had ceased to believe in God'. They are: 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil', and, 'Be strong and of a good courage . . . for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest'.

A great event in Lord Russell's life, as in that of Hobbes, was making acquaintance with Euclid. Fortunately this happened in Russell's case when he was eleven years old, and not, as with Hobbes, in late middle life. So Lord Russell did not get a bee in his bonnet about squaring the circle; that part in his life was destined to be played by politics, practical and theoretical, and not by geometry.

By the age of fifteen Lord Russell had reached by his own reflexions a theory of mind and matter very much like that of Descartes. At about that age he became passionately interested in religion and examined seriously the arguments for free-will, immortality, and theism. This process went on for three years, and resulted in his rejecting successively free-will, immortality, and the existence of God. Hitherto he had accepted the last of these dogmas on the basis of the argument for a first cause. This argument collapsed

for him, when, at the age of eighteen, he read in Mill's *Autobiography* that James Mill had pointed out that the question : ' Who made God ? ' could always be raised. (I should think that belief in God must already have been fairly thoroughly undermined if it caved in on just that occasion.)

Lord Russell gives a most attractive picture of his life as an undergraduate at Cambridge, with such friends as McTaggart, Lowes Dickinson, Charles Sanger, the brothers Llewellyn Davies, the brothers Trevelyan, and G. E. Moore. Seen from the standpoint of our wretched present and our forbidding future, it is indeed a paradise of civilisation and decency and not unreasonable hopefulness. I can remember enough of its last phase, immediately before the catastrophe of the first world-war, to re-echo Lord Russell's saying : ' For those who have been young since 1914 it must be difficult to imagine the happiness of those days '. (If it be objected that I, and *a fortiori* Lord Russell, view the past too exclusively from the standpoint of the relatively well-to-do, I will admit that England has achieved since then a more equally distributed state of squalor, discomfort and insecurity.)

Lord Russell mentions an exciting moment in 1894, when he was an Absolute Idealist and a great admirer of Bradley. He had gone to buy a tin of tobacco, and, returning to his rooms by way of Trinity Lane, he suddenly had a flash of apparent insight which led him to throw the tin up and catch it, exclaiming : ' Great Scott, the ontological argument is sound ! '

In 1898 he was led to abandon idealism. The process started with his own reflexions on the nonsense that Hegel wrote about mathematics, but was accelerated by the influence of Moore. He reckons the most important event in his intellectual development to be his visit to the International Congress of Philosophy at Paris in 1900, where he met Peano and his pupils. Thereafter he began to work with Whitehead in applying their method to the philosophy of mathematics.

From 1901 to 1905 Lord Russell was wrestling with the contradictions which had emerged in the notion of classes. In 1905 came one of his most important contributions to logic, the theory of definite descriptions, which offered *inter alia* a possible way of escape from these paradoxes.

This led to the general problem of the meaning of words and the significance of sentences, to which Russell has returned again and again. He says that the more he has thought about it the less convinced he has become that logic can be made completely independent of psychology. It is therefore particularly important to delimit the problems which can be dealt with by purely logical methods.

Lord Russell says that his works on theory of knowledge convey the impression that he is more sceptical and subjectivist than he really is. His actual position is that he believes (though without

good grounds) in the world described by physics as well as in that which he immediately experiences at any moment. He finds it obvious that any knowledge which he has of the former must be based on 'inference', in a wide sense, from the latter. What he would like to do now is to discover and formulate the principles of inference which would be required in order to derive his beliefs about the world as described by physics from what he immediately experiences. If these principles could be formulated clearly, one might accept them or reject them or remain doubtful about them; but what would be proved is that *either they or solipsism must be accepted.* (It is worth remarking that this programme is a perfect example of the Transcendental Method, which that 'disaster' Kant introduced into philosophy.)

Russell remarks that history has always interested him more than anything else except philosophy and mathematics, and that his experiences in China taught him to think in long stretches of time and not to be reduced to despair by the evils of the present. He concludes his autobiographical sketch with the following reflexions. He has always ardently desired 'to find some justification for the emotions inspired by certain things that seem to stand outside human life and to deserve feelings of awe'. Among these he includes the sublime in external nature, and systems of timeless truth such as pure mathematics. But, as a result of his philosophical studies, he has had to conclude that there is nothing in the existent world which he 'can value, outside human beings, and, to a much less extent, animals', and that pure mathematics is 'nothing but tautologies'. On the other hand, he has derived great intellectual satisfaction from the progress which has been made in his lifetime in logic and those branches of philosophy which have proved amenable to the technique of logical analysis.

I must now say something about the essays by other writers, and about Lord Russell's comments on certain points in some of them. There is an excellent general account of Russell's philosophy by Mr. Weitz, based on a close study of the texts. Mr. Weitz tries to establish two points, viz., (1) that the fundamental element in Russell's philosophy is the method of analysis; (2) that this has been exemplified in four ways, which may be called 'ontological', 'formal', 'logistical', and 'the resolution of incomplete symbols'. Russell speaks of this account of his philosophy as 'in the main . . . completely just', and contents himself with correcting a few mistakes on matters of detail. In particular he restates the theory, set forth in the *Enquiry into Meaning and Truth*, that a determinate shade of colour is a particular which may occupy several different positions in sensible space at the same or different moments of experienced time.

There are two essays which deal explicitly with Russell's logic, one by Hr. Reichenbach and the other by Hr. Gödel, and two others which may fairly be classed under this heading, viz. Mr. Feibleman's

'Reply to Bertrand Russell's Introduction to the Second Edition of *The Principles of Mathematics*' and Mr. Black's 'Russell's Philosophy of Language'.

Hr. Gödel's essay, which is highly technical, is concerned mainly with Russell's treatment of the logical paradoxes. It came late into Lord Russell's hands and he merely gives a respectful acknowledgment of it.

Hr. Reichenbach discusses first Russell's view of the relation of logic to arithmetic, and distinguishes between the logical definition of the natural numbers and the physical application of them in counting and mixing collections of material objects. Then he gives a brief discussion of the Theory of Types. Next he discusses the Law of Excluded Middle and sings the praises of his Dulcinea '3-valued logic'. Then he asks Russell to state his present views on Induction, and to say whether he regards 'sense-data statements' as *absolutely* certain or only as having the highest attainable degree of certainty. The main points in Lord Russell's answer are the following. (1) It is possible to reject the Law of Excluded Middle and to construct logical systems on that basis. (2) Everyone in fact believes and will go on believing many propositions which are not verifiable, and the old 2-valued system is needed if we are to include unverifiable truths. (3) If we are unwilling to pretend to doubt propositions which we cannot in fact help believing, the result of logical analysis is to show that far more independent premisses are involved in our knowledge than we had suspected. Among such premisses will be one or more principles by means of which Induction can be justified. 'I do not see any way out of a dogmatic assertion that we know the inductive principle, or some equivalent; the only alternative is to throw over almost everything that is regarded as knowledge by science and common sense'.

The main importance of Mr. Feibleman's 'appeal to the Old Whig from the New' is that it calls forth from Lord Russell a rather detailed account of his present views about universals. The gist of it is that, although all other universal-names can be replaced by particular-names and the word 'similar' or some equivalent, this is as far as one can go. The word 'similar' remains a universal-name. Every minimum vocabulary adequate to describing the world of ordinary experience must contain at least one universal-name; but this word may function only as an adjective or a verb, it need never be used as a substantive. This condition which is imposed on every adequate *description* of the world 'seems to imply something about the world'. That is the sense in which Lord Russell still believes in universals.

Mr. Black's essay on Russell's Philosophy of Language is elaborate and careful. He discusses three main topics, *viz.*, (1) the consequences of applying the theory of types to ordinary language, (2) the search for 'ultimate constituents' of the world, and (3) the

notion of an 'ideal language'. In connexion with the theory of types he constructs a new paradox, and considers how Russell's theory would have to be recast in order to deal with it. In reference to the doctrine of 'ultimate constituents' he considers and rejects Russell's principle that, if a proposition is to be intelligible to a person, all its constituents must be objects of acquaintance to him. Finally he condemns the search for an 'ideal language' as the unprofitable pursuit of an ideal which is in principle unattainable. Both Mr. Black's arguments and Lord Russell's answers to them are too complex to be summarised here. Whilst admitting the force of some of the arguments, Lord Russell claims that Mr. Black has seriously misunderstood him on several important matters.

Professor Moore contributes a long and meticulously careful paper on Russell's Theory of Descriptions. According to Moore, Russell intends to assert at least two things. The first can be stated in terms of what Moore calls 'C-sentences' and ' Γ -propositions'; the second in terms of what he calls 'D-sentences' and ' Δ -propositions'. A C-sentence is one of the following form: "The proposition 'the instance of ϕ is ψ ' entails and is entailed by the conjunctive proposition 'there is at least one instance of ϕ , there is at most one instance of ϕ , and there is no instance of ϕ -and-not- ψ '". A Γ -proposition is one which would be expressed by a C-sentence. The first part of Russell's theory is that enormous numbers of Γ -propositions are true.

A D-sentence is one of the following form: "The sentence 'the instance of ϕ is ψ ' means neither more nor less than that there is at least one instance of ϕ , at most one instance of ϕ , and no instance of ϕ -and-not- ψ ; and anyone who says that it does so will, by so saying, be giving a definition of its meaning." A Δ -proposition is one which would be expressed by a D-sentence. The second part of Russell's theory is that enormous numbers of Δ -propositions are true.

Moore thinks it certain that the first part of Russell's theory is true; and that, although this is obvious when pointed out, it was a great achievement of Russell's to observe it. In order to see whether the second part of Russell's theory is true Moore embarks on a very elaborate and subtle description of the nature of definition and of the conditions under which a certain sentence can be truly said to mean neither more nor less than a certain proposition or conjunction of propositions. This seems to me to be much the most valuable contribution to philosophy in the whole of the present volume. At the end of it, Moore comes to the conclusion that the second part of the theory is also true. He points out that this is compatible with the falsity of any particular Δ -proposition, and that in fact great numbers of Δ -propositions are false.

Moore holds that there is a third thing which Russell meant to assert. It is that, whilst a complete sentence of the form 'The King of France is wise' can be defined in the way suggested, the

constituent phrase 'the King of France' cannot be defined. After an elaborate discussion Moore accepts this also. But he is not prepared to admit that, when such a phrase occurs elsewhere in a sentence, the phrase is never definable. He takes as an example the case of a man who had pointed to Louis XIV and said : 'That is the King of France'.

Next comes a paper by Mr. Wiener on Method in Russell's Work on Leibniz. The only point which I shall mention is one which Lord Russell takes up wrongly, in my opinion. He ascribes to Mr. Wiener the remark that 'since Leibniz's premisses were *false* they could have proved anything' (my italics). He proceeds to refute Mr. Wiener on the assumption that the latter is arguing from the principle that a false proposition materially implies all propositions. What Mr. Wiener actually says (p. 264) is : 'On Russell's analysis, Leibniz's system is *inconsistent*; therefore Leibniz could have proven any proposition' (my italics).

Then follows a short essay by Professor Einstein on Russell's Theory of Knowledge. Russell treats it with exaggerated respect, but does not profess to understand it. So far as I can make out, it advocates the view that certain categories which the mind brings to the interpretation of the data of sense experience are an irreducible factor in the genesis of knowledge.

The late Professor Laird contributed an interesting critical essay on the main views about the nature of the human mind expressed by Russell in the *Analysis of Mind*. It seems to me doubtful whether there is as much difference between Laird's and Russell's views of the self as the two writers think. Laird says (p. 301) that he thinks "that selves are very peculiar and highly integrated bundles of what Broad calls 'sympsyctic' experiences". Russell says (p. 699) that the experiences which are said to belong to a single person are interconnected by certain relations which do not interconnect experiences which are said to belong to different persons. Among these relations he mentions 'remembering or being remembered by' and 'compresence'. Where is the difference in principle?

Laird made a point which he evidently thought important, but which Russell does not take up. He suggested that reflexive awareness of one's own experiences does not involve a duality of act and object, as, *e.g.*, attending to an external object or inspecting a visual sense-datum ostensibly does. His suggestion seems to be as follows. To say, *e.g.*, that I am aware of seeing my finger is analogous to saying that I am feeling a feeling of sorrow. It is not analogous to saying that I am visually aware of my finger. I must confess that this analogy does not help me to understand reflexive awareness. To say that I am feeling a feeling of sorrow seems to be merely classifying the experience as one of sorrow and not to be making a statement about my awareness of anything.

Laird criticised the notion of mnemonic causation as involving too

great a discontinuity between cause and effect. Russell says that he agrees, and would now appeal to modifications of brain-structure.

Two essays which may be mentioned together are Mr. Nagel's on Russell's Philosophy of Science and Mr. Stace's on Russell's Neutral Monism. The former is severely critical of such statements by Russell as that we do *not* see the sun, and that a physiologist looking at another man's brain is in fact seeing *his own brain*. The latter (which seems to me to be an excellent critical account of its subject) is based mainly on the *Analysis of Mind* and *Our Knowledge of the External World*.

Mr. Nagel's criticisms lead Lord Russell to restate his present views about physics and philosophy. He starts by accepting as practically certain all propositions which a consensus of physicists would assert. If these propositions are honestly accepted, they commit us to accepting the occurrence of unobserved events. In modern physics the fundamental notion is that of event, and the laws (except in regard to quantum phenomena) presuppose that processes are spatio-temporally continuous. This is Lord Russell's ontological basis; his epistemological problem is: 'What sort of relation exists between, e.g., the event called 'seeing the sun' and the sun?' The causal theory of perception must be accepted. It follows from it that we must either cease to use the word 'see' or use it in an unusual sense; for in its usual sense it presupposes naïve realism, and this is false. Russell then explains what he means by saying that a person's visual percepts are 'in' his brain, though not 'parts of' his brain, and why he says it. He remarks that all philosophers have misunderstood his views on this matter and that Mr. Nagel is no exception.

In clearing up obscurities which his theory of neutral monism presented to Mr. Stace Lord Russell says that the theory may best be understood if one starts from Leibniz's monadism and then modifies it in certain ways. The monads are not to be 'windowless' and are not to be 'souls'. Each monad 'mirrors' only a part of the universe. The image of monad B in monad A depends, not only on the relative 'points of view' of the two, but also on the nature of the intervening medium. Again, A mirrors at any moment, not the contemporary state of B, but a state which existed at an earlier moment of neutral time; the difference of date being correlated with the difference of point of view. Lastly, the image which B alone would produce in A may so interfere with the contemporary image which C alone would produce in A that the resultant event in A cannot properly be regarded as an image of either or of both. Russell adds that he holds *both* perceived primary qualities and secondary qualities to be 'subjective' in the same sense; that he agrees with Mr. Stace in holding that there is no *prima facie* objection to psycho-physical dualism, and that certain data characteristic of mind as opposed to matter are observable by introspection. He is inclined to agree that generality is something

which is peculiar to *thought* and not explicable in terms of images and sensations. Lastly, he discusses the criticism that he has failed in his attempt to construct matter 'out of verifiabiles alone'. He answers that this is true if 'verifiable' be taken in the narrower sense of 'capable of being an object of human acquaintance'; but it is not true if 'verifiable' be taken in a wider sense which includes 'inferrible in accordance with the recognised canons of scientific method'.

Mr. Ushenko contributes a paper on Russell's Critique of Empiricism. This is concerned entirely with the doctrines contained in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*. Lord Russell praises the essay, but finds little to say about it just because it contains such an 'unusually large measure of understanding and agreement'.

Mr. Chisholm, who gives his address as 'U.S. Army', writes an interesting essay entitled 'Russell on the Foundations of Empirical Knowledge'. It is concerned with the notion that certain of our experiences are epistemologically primitive and that others are epistemologically derivative in relation to the former, and with the kind of experiences which Russell puts into the one class or into the other. It leads Lord Russell first to state the case *against* this view, and then to develop his own view in answering the argument which he has put up. He argues that, in general, observations are epistemologically prior to laws, although a well-established law may cast doubt on a particular observation that seems to conflict with it; that knowledge of a conjunctive proposition is epistemologically posterior to knowledge of each of its conjuncts; and that a sense-experience is epistemologically prior to the perceptual judgment which is based on it, since it is both logically and physically possible to have precisely similar sense-experiences when the perceptual judgment is true and when it is false.

There follow two papers, one by the late Professor Harold Chapman Brown, entitled 'A Logician in the Field of Psychology' and the other by Mr. Boodin, entitled 'Russell's Metaphysics', of which the less said the better.

Next come two essays which may be taken together. One is by Mr. Buchler on Russell's ethics, and the other by Mr. Brightman on his philosophy of religion. In reply to both Russell tries to make his views about ethics clearer. Both writers find an inconsistency in the fact that Russell feels strongly about what he asserts to be good or to be evil, and yet holds that ultimate ethical valuations are subjective. Russell says that his view is that, when a person seriously says 'X is good as an end', he is expressing a desire on his own part that X should be realised and a wish that other men had similar desires. If you strongly desire that other men should desire something which you yourself desire, where is the inconsistency in expressing that desire vehemently? He feels, however, that this kind of answer will not give complete satisfaction, and he admits that there is one respect in which it does not satisfy

himself. When he expresses an ethical desire he cannot help *feeling* that the desire which he is expressing 'is *right*, whatever that may mean'. Thus he feels there to be something in moral experience which his own theory of ethics does not account for. But 'while my own opinions as to ethics do not satisfy me, other peoples' satisfy me still less'.

Mr. Buchler twits Lord Russell with lack of *sophrosyne*. Lord Russell gives us to understand that he has no use for *sophrosyne*. One singular reason is that he 'associates it with a secure income'. I suspect that most of the more amiable virtues presuppose a modest competency or something equivalent to it; and contemplation of those persons who have conspicuously lacked *sophrosyne*, from Alexander the Great through Martin Luther to our late dear Führer, suggests that it is not altogether to be despised.

Mr. Brightman, in dealing with Lord Russell's utterances on religion, performs a difficult task with great skill and tact. For those utterances plainly depend very much on the mood of the speaker and the nature of his audience; ranging, as they do, from extremely cheap sarcasm, through the overwrought and intellectually incoherent rhetoric of the *Free Man's Worship*, to moving expressions of feelings which are obviously deep and sincere. He has his reward, for Lord Russell is at his best in the short reply which he makes. Russell remarks that his attitude towards religion is complex because religion covers three topics; *viz.*, a man's serious personal beliefs, so far as they have to do with the nature of the world and the conduct of life; theology, *i.e.* the part of religion with which philosophers as such are concerned; and religious institutions. Russell's attitude is complex because he 'considers some form of personal religion highly desirable, and feels many people unsatisfactory through the lack of it', but cannot accept the theology of any well-known religion, and thinks that most churches at most times have done more harm than good.

I shall do little more than mention the remaining four essays, which are concerned with Lord Russell's views on politics, economics, and education. Mr. Lindeman writes on Russell's Social Philosophy, Mr. McGill on his Political and Economic Philosophy, Mr. Bode on his Educational Philosophy, and Mr. Hook on his Philosophy of History. It will suffice here to say that Mr. Hook's essay is very good indeed; that Lord Russell is very cross with poor Mr. Bode; and that Mr. McGill's paper is one of those pious exercises in Marxian apologetics which make one feel so uncomfortable because they remind one so much of the defensive reactions of the mother of a deformed or mentally deficient child. I cannot resist quoting a delightful passage from Lord Russell's reply to the naughty Mr. Bode, who, he thinks, would not have cared to have Christ as a colleague. (Who would?, I wonder.) "Perhaps something could be done to make people aware what Christ's teaching was. I suggest that clergymen who have occasion to read in church the

parable of the Good Samaritan should substitute for 'Samaritan' either 'German' or 'Japanese'. They would thus restore to the parable its original flavour, which it has entirely lost through the fact that we expect a Samaritan to be good."

I hope I may be excused if I end this review with a personal confession. I was invited by Professor Schilpp to contribute to this volume, and it was with the deepest regret that I felt obliged to decline. At the time I was so much involved in non-philosophical business, undertaken in consequence of the war, that I could not possibly have contributed anything that I should think worthy to be included in a volume in honour of Lord Russell and his philosophy. Professor Laird, at the end of his essay, pays an eloquent tribute to the intellectual stimulus which he derived, as an undergraduate at Trinity, from Lord Russell, and the generosity with which Lord Russell gave his time to personal discussions with his pupils. I was an undergraduate at Trinity along with Laird, and I can most heartily confirm on my own behalf all that he says. There is no one philosopher to whom I owe so much as to Lord Russell, and I recall with delight and gratitude the many hours which I spent in his company, his invariable kindness and hospitality, and the wit and charm of his conversation. No man that I know has altered so little for the worse with increasing years. When I meet him and talk to him now, I can shut my eyes and think myself back in his room in Nevile's Court in those days before 1914, 'the happiness of which it is difficult for those born later to imagine'

C. D. BROAD.

Kantian Studies. By A. H. SMITH, Warden of New College, Oxford. Oxford: University Press, 1947. Pp. vi + 196. 15s.

THIS work consists of five studies of central doctrines in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, undertaken by Mr. A. H. Smith as prolegomena to the development of the theory which he expounded in his book *A Treatise on Knowledge*, published in 1943. The earlier book consists of a section on Hume's Doctrine Regarding Our Consciousness of Objects, a section on Kant's Theory of Knowledge, and a section devoted to the exposition of Mr. Smith's own theory.¹ The present work provides a more detailed and extended examination of the doctrines studied in the second section—doctrines which comprise Kant's theory of Consciousness and Its Objects, of the Antithesis of the Form and Matter of Intuition, and of Self-Consciousness. It opens with a study of Kant's Doctrine of the Relation between

¹This may be described as a form of Universalistic Idealism, similar in important respects to that of T. H. Green.