

- J. Segond, *Cournot et la psychologie vitaliste*: J. LOTTIN. E. Rolfes, *Die Wahrheit des Glaubens durch gründliche Beweise ins Licht gestellt*: MOUSTIERS. *Sommaire idéologique des ouvrages et Revues de Philosophie*.
- Seth, James. *English Philosophers and Schools of Philosophy*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1912. Pp. xi + 372. \$1.50.
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NOTES AND NEWS

A GROUP of European professors distinguished in philosophy and science has issued an appeal to all who are interested in promoting the scientific spirit in philosophy. They explain their undertaking as follows:

"There has long been felt the need of a philosophy which should grow in a natural manner out of the facts and problems of natural science. The mechanical view of nature no longer satisfies this need. Let any one recall the "Ignorabimus" of Du Bois Reymond and the various attempts to relate mechanical and psychological processes by means of neovitalistic concepts, attempts of physicists as well as of biologists. The current philosophy, of Kantian origin for the most part, or with strongly Kantian emphasis, is impotent here, because it directs its inquiries without any deep appreciation of the need in question, because it treats of problems scarcely intelligible to any one who comes to them from the natural science of to-day, and because it is usually not able to go far enough into the questions of natural science.

To be sure, there has grown up from the soil of natural science itself a strictly empirical and positivistic point of view quite indifferent to metaphysical speculation and to so-called critical, transcendental doctrines. Its principles are however not yet accepted in their essential meanings and systematic relations throughout considerable scientific circles. They are even completely misunderstood by distinguished scientists as they are by most of the influential philosophers.

On the other hand the particular sciences find themselves forced to consider problems of even greater generality so that they take on of themselves a philosophical character. Mathematics advances to higher and higher abstractions. Geometry, in its deductive development, is freeing itself from all intuition after overcoming the limits of the Euclidean conception of space. In the theory of groups it has reached a positive treatment of the concept of infinity, once a purely negative idea, and it faces now the question of its differentiation from logic. Physics has been made to include more and more remote fields of research. Optics and all the phenomena of radiation have been brought under the concepts of electromagnetic theory, and physics has now before it the question, how far can mechanics be interpreted in terms of electromagnetism? In the theory

of relativity it touches the most searching question thus far of epistemology: Is 'absolute or is only relative knowledge attainable? Indeed: Is absolute knowledge conceivable? It comes here directly upon the question of man's place in the world, the question of the connection of thought with the brain. What is thought? What are concepts? What are laws? In psychological problems, physics and biology come together. And finally, the anthropological sciences, especially history and sociology, find themselves brought into closer and closer connection with biological concepts.

Those who take an interest in these progressive inquiries will find it to their advantage to have a scientific association which shall declare itself opposed to all metaphysical undertakings, and have for its first principle the strictest and most comprehensive ascertainment of facts in all fields of research and in the development of organization and technique. All theories and requirements are to rest exclusively on this ground of facts and find here their ultimate criterion.

Annual reports will bring together all branches of the association, the bibliographies will be collected of the material that can be made to contribute to strictly positivistic theory, and as soon as possible a periodical, for which the resources are already assured, will serve the undertaking.

We ask for members and active cooperation. If all those who are competent and earnest in genuinely scientific philosophical work, or who take an interest in the progress and results of such research, will write in this way we can not fail to meet with success, which will lead us in no distant future out of the unsatisfactory conditions of the present. The present day is surfeited with the fruitless and nearly uniform repetition of philosophical ideas, often expressed before, but not sufficiently clear and concrete, and, on the other hand, with the increasing separation of science into ever smaller divisions and with the merely external accumulation of results. The present day desires the solution of general problems, which research itself throws up, and is not to be put off with an *Ignorabimus* for which there is no evidence."

The appeal is signed by E. Dietzgen, Professor Dr. Einstein, Professor Dr. Forel, Professor Dr. Föppl, Professor Dr. S. Freud, Professor Dr. Helm, Professor Dr. Hilbert, Professor Dr. Jensen, Professor Dr. Jerusalem, Professor Dr. Kammerer, Professor Dr. B. Kern, Professor Dr. F. Klein, Professor Dr. Lamprecht, Professor Dr. v. Liszt, Professor Dr. Loeb, Professor Dr. E. Mach, Professor Dr. G. E. Müller, Dr. Müller-Lyer, Josef Popper, Professor Dr. Potonié, Professor Dr. Rhumbler, Professor Dr. Ribbert, Professor Dr. Roux, Professor Dr. F. C. S. Schiller, Professor Dr. Schuppe, Professor Dr. Ritter v. Seeliger, Professor Dr. Cönnies, Professor Dr. Verworn, Professor Dr. Wernicke, Professor Dr. Wiener, Professor Dr. Th. Ziehen, M. H. Baege, Professor Dr. Petzoldt. For further information address Mr. M. H. Baege, Waldowstrasse 23, Friedrichshagen b. Berlin, Germany.