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My dear Dr Ross,

Your wonderful letter about Nelson arrived only today - a Christmas present! - , an hour ago. The Publishers through whom you hoped to send it kept it from November 12 to December 15; obviously, they may easily have lost it.

Let me first tell you that your suspicion that I am "not even interested ~~that~~ in having Nelson's theories re-argued" is mistaken. On the contrary. Of course, I very much doubt that my present view of Fries-Nelson is mistaken. But it may be mistaken; and nobody (except you) would be happier than I if I could revise my theories on this point.

I wrote, between 1925 or 26 and 1933, very intensively on a book, essentially about Kant-Fries-Nelson; part of the MS was lost (owing to Hitler and Feyerabend); and the rest was published in 1979 under the title (which dated probably from 1930) Die beiden Grundprobleme der Erkenntnistheorie in Tübingen, Germany, by J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck). I suppose it will be unobtainable for you in the U.S.; and it is now for some years, out of print in Germany: I wanted to revise it by adding a new postscript on the theory of Immediate Knowledge. In fact, this is one of my most pressing tasks.

However, I am now well over 90 years old and very slow; and I have, unfortunately, several <sup>other</sup> pressing obligations. And I receive every day a lot of letters—far more than I can answer.

It may well be true that I have misunderstood Fries-Nelson: I tried hard to understand them. It is not easy, as you are bound to know.

I suppose (and hope) that you have access to Leonard Nelson's Gesammelte Schriften in Neun Bänden — 9 beautiful volumes which I am fortunate to own. In volume II, p. 485 ff there are lots of things which I fail to understand, especially in Nelson's reply to Schiller. My hypothesis so far was that Nelson is ununderstandable because he is wrong: if genuine Erkenntnis is something that is always true (and only our Urteile can and are — often mistaken — than, I suggest, Erkenntnis in Nelson's sense just does not exist. But I would be happy if I could see where I am in error with this Urteil.

I take this to be extremely important. But it is almost as important to have received a letter from a man who takes philosophy (or anything) seriously. I thought the breed had died out.

Yours sincerely,

Karl Popper

I cannot write more —  
too much pressure of urgent work.

Concerning Russell: have you forgotten Principles of Mathematics and Principia Mathematica?

<http://www.friesian.com/ross/popper.htm>

