

WILLIAM JAMES AND OTHER ESSAYS. By JOSIAH ROYCE, LL.D. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911.

This volume by Professor Royce contains five essays, of which the first is really the least important and the last two are the best exposition of Dr. Royce's philosophical idealism, as he calls it; but which might also be described as his philosophical brief for dogmatic theology.

Professor Royce sets Dr. James, as a philosophical thinker, in direct natural succession to Jonathan Edwards and Emerson. He analyzes him as typically an American; no disciple of Greece or the Orient, still less of Germany or England, but one whose thought, emotion, and speech are the natural product of American soil. He is also the successor to the storm-and-stress period, and heir to the second great period of evolutionary thought—namely, to that period when thinkers no longer discuss, but simply accept the notion of the natural origin of organic forms and continuity of the processes of development. Professor Royce points out James's turning from the Old World types of reverence and external forms of the Church, as well as his alienation from the barren and hostile free-thinking by many European philosophies. James's ready and inclusive comprehension of all the types of religious experience, Dr. Royce sets down to his democratic training. That this inclusion should seem unsatisfactory to our author is a fore-

gone conclusion to those who know Dr. Royce's philosophy. "The spirit triumphs," he says, "not by destroying the chaos James describes, but by brooding upon the face of the deep till the light comes, and with light, order."

The second essay, "Loyalty and Insight," serves excellently to introduce Professor Royce's continuing tenet; namely that having chosen a belief, a profession, a theory, we get the value of choice only by consistent adherence or loyalty. Loyalty, he urges, binds men together and induces the separate wills in the business firm, the household, the profession, the spiritual community, to unite and be woven into one so that our fortunes and interests are no longer detached and individual but have the force of a social group. "The whole moral law can be summed up in the two commandments: first, be loyal; and, second, so choose, so serve, and so unify that life-cause to which you yourself are loyal that, through your choice, through your service, through your example, and through your dealings with all men, you may, as far as in you lies, help other people to be loyal to their causes."

To a student unversed in Professor Royce's work, the essay on "What is Vital in Christianity" will bring a momentary shock of surprise, when he finds that not the historic Christ, not the human example, and most assuredly not the direct teachings of Christ are what the author conceives as vital, but the ecclesiastical dogmas of the incarnation and atonement. There is the time-honored attempt to account for an evil world as the product of an omnipotent and perfect God, by our fragmentary perceptions of world-processes and the doctrine that perfection is only reached through pain. Of course the eternally recurrent reply is, that if our world is even a fragment of the divine it should partake of the nature of the Whole. Must not the part be the same *in kind* as the whole? But this question Professor Royce does not touch. "Like the Logos," he says, "the entire world is not only with God but is God."

The fourth essay, on "The Problem of Truth in the Light of Recent Discussion," was an address delivered before the International Congress of Philosophy, at Heidelberg, 1908. Of course this essay attempts a refutation of the pragmatist contention that truth is relative; namely the relation of the less fixed parts of our experience to the more fixed parts. Dr. Royce accounts for the pragmatist's theory by three modern tendencies or motives. The first, that motive which leads many of us to describe human life altogether as a more or less progressive adaptation to natural environment. The second is the motive glorified by Nietzsche, the attempt to be self-possessed and inwardly free, and unsubmitive to any external authority. The third is the motive which leads us to seek for clear, exact self-consciousness regarding the principles of our belief and conduct. The natural result of these three controlling motives is, thinks Professor Royce, a relativistic, evolutionary theory of truth; a theory that transforms truth from a barren repetition of dead reality to the self-created, empirical realities of our successful activities. Those who know "The World and the Individual" also know the reply to this: that truth can be measured by no one man's experience and that in order to cope with it at all there must be a spirit which is more than any man's transient consciousness of his own efforts unless there is unity of experience, an unity objective, real, supra-temporal.

What this spirit is, one may best tell by quoting from essay V, on Immortality, the definition of God:

“I mean by the term God, the totality of the expressions and life of the world—will, when considered in its conscious unity. God is a consciousness which knows and which intends the entire life of the world.” Here one has come around again to the same point in the circle. Why are the fragments of the whole evil if the whole itself is good? One cannot but wish that Dr. Royce had brought in the mystic doctrine of unification; namely that as consciousness throws off its personal limits, as the fragment *does* identify itself with the whole there is resultant joy and good. The sense of separateness is the world’s great woe.

From the standpoint of lucidity, since these lectures are admittedly popular, one wishes that Dr. Royce were occasionally more terse and willing to emphasize by repetition. It is annoying to the reader to find his author saying, “I will now state the third motive” and then be obliged to read thirteen pages before that motive is mentioned, holding the mind meantime in suspense. A statement made at the beginning and repeated after the exposition would have bettered the style and been most helpful to the reader.