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Author(s): John Wright Buckham

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THE CONTRIBUTION OF PROFESSOR ROYCE
TO CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM

PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

Theology is constantly recognizing, more fully and more freely, the closeness of its relation to philosophy. Starting though they do from different impulses—theology attempting to interpret experience and philosophy to attain knowledge—they converge upon a common field. No great theologian but influences philosophy, no great philosopher but affects theology.

Of American philosophers since Edwards, no one has made so rich, profound, and extensive a contribution to religious thought as Josiah Royce.

I

It is impossible to understand Professor Royce's philosophy without realizing its close relation, from the very start, to the problems of *religion*, or rather of theology. It is not without significance that the title of his earliest volume is *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* and that of his latest, *The Problem of Christianity*. That the religious interest was uppermost in the awakening of this puissant mind is left without a shadow of doubt by an unequivocal statement in the preface of the first volume, as follows: "The religious problems have been chosen for the present study because they drove the author to philosophy, and because they, of all human

interests, deserve our best efforts and our utmost loyalty.”¹

The note of loyalty, as well as that of religious interest, thus early struck, emerges later as the keynote of his ethical teaching.

One does not read far in this first fresh and vigorous volume, written at the age of thirty, before realizing that it came from the reaction of a deeply reverent and penetrative mind, trained in a home of piety and a church of power, against the religious conceptions then prevalent in practically all, even the freest and broadest, American churches. The author sees that religion cannot be true to itself without asking “how the highest thought of man stands related to our highest needs and what in things answers to our best ideals.”

“Here are questions of tremendous importance to us and to the world. We are sluggards or cowards if, pretending to be philosophic students and genuine seekers of truth, we do not attempt to do something with these questions. We are worse than cowards if, attempting to consider them, we do so otherwise than reverently, fearlessly, and honestly.”²

In particular, it was the limitation of *the idea of God* then prevalent in both orthodox and liberal churches which aroused his concern, and it is with this doctrine that the book is mainly occupied. Very clear and imperative rings his challenge to those who are content with “their own little contemptible private notion and dim feeling of a God.” “Take heed,” he writes, “lest your object of worship be only your own little pet infinite, that is sublime to you mainly because it is yours.”³

The Being whose existence depends upon the traditional arguments “aptly compared to medieval artillery

¹ *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy*, p. v.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13. The quotations are from the First Edition.

on a modern battle-field," the God "who is constantly producing noteworthy effects and so getting himself into the newspapers," is, in his unfettered, critical judgment worse than none. In place of such a god the author prefers to conceive of God as "Universal Thought," and as such he essays to interpret Him.

The pathway by which he reaches the certainty that there is such a Being is the study of the nature of error. The argument drawn from the possibility of error is, in brief, as follows:

"That there is error is indubitable. What is, however, an error? The substance of our whole reasoning about the nature of error amounted to the result that in and of itself alone, no single judgment is or can be an error. Only as actually included in a higher thought, that gives to the first its completed object, and compares it therewith, is the first thought an error."¹

This "Inclusive Thought" is none other than God. Everything else may be doubted except this.

"They reckon ill that leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt."²

The All-Thinker is also the All - Enfolder, the Infinite Spirit, Universal Will. Yet His inmost essence is Thought.

"Not heart nor love, though these also are in it and of it. Thought it is, and all things are for Thought, and in it we live and move."

II

In Professor Royce's next book, a fascinating and penetrative review of modern philosophy, entitled *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, published in 1892, he moves forward toward a fuller conception of the Divine

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

² *Ibid.*, p. 434.

Being as containing not only Thought but Worth—the values of the “world of appreciation.” This advance in his interpretation of God came to complete and signal expression in the philosophical discussion at the University of California in 1895—perhaps the most noteworthy that has occurred in America. The chief contributions to this discussion were published in the volume, *The Conception of God*. In the brilliant address with which Professor Royce opened the discussion, he presented the conception of God as embodied in the attribute of Omniscience. God is the Absolute, Organized Experience, “related to our experience as an organic whole to its fragments.”¹ The existence of such an Absolute Experience is proved—and here we have the proof from the nature of error in another form—by the fact that the very denial of it is an appeal to it as vindicator of the denial; for nothing can be true or false except it be such to an Inclusive Experience. “The very effort to deny an absolute experience involves, then, the actual assertion of such an absolute experience.”²

Without lingering upon this subtle form of proof—a stronghold of philosophical argument which the forces of scepticism find it easier to go around than to demolish—is it impertinent to ask: What is gained by proving that there is a Universal Experience? That is easily granted without proof. The thing needing proof is that this Universal Experience is God.

Professor Royce claimed for this conception of God that it was “distinctly theistic and not pantheistic.”³

“For my own part, then, while I wish to be no slave of any tradition, I am certainly disposed to insist that what the faith of our fathers has genuinely meant by God, is, despite all the blindness and all the unessential accidents of religious tradition, identical with the inevitable outcome of a reflective philosophy.”⁴

¹ *The Conception of God*, p. 44.

² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

Against this assumption Professor Howison, who represented the distinctly personalistic point of view in the discussion, protested, declaring that such a representation of God "is not the conception of a Being that we can adore at all. The fault of it at the bar of the religious reason is, that by force of the argument leading to it all the contradictions and tragic discords belonging to experience must be taken up directly into the life of the Absolute; they are His experiences as well as ours, and must be left in Him at once both dissolved and undissolved, unharmonized as well as harmonized, stilled and yet raging, atoned for and yet unatoned."¹

Under the searching criticism of Professor Howison, who insisted that the conception of the Divine Being as Absolute Experience is not only unworshipful but inimical to God's ethical nature and also that it contradicts the freedom of the individual, Professor Royce wrote a supplementary essay upon *The Absolute and the Individual*, which is included in the same volume. In this he lays stress upon the process of individuation which takes place in the Absolute, endeavoring to show that the Absolute "has room for ethical individuality without detriment to its true unity."²

In seeking to accomplish this end, Professor Royce—whether consistently or not we will not here pause to discuss—defines God both as a self-conscious individual and as "the only ultimately real because the only absolutely whole individual."³ This Whole Individual embraces every individual ego, each individual's plan being "identically a part of God's own attentively selected and universal plan."⁴ The language reminds one of a certain Protestant theologian not now in so high repute as formerly.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.² *Ibid.*, p. 137.³ *Ibid.*, p. 272.⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

III

The Absolutism thus outlined reaches its full expression and defence in Professor Royce's greatest and most profound work—on the whole probably the most thorough and sustained work of American philosophy—the Gifford Lectures, *The World and the Individual*. If I venture not only to characterize but to criticise this masterpiece of philosophical thought, it is not without a reverent sense of the original power and imperishable worth of this burning bush of high and holy thinking which so few turn aside to see.

Just as “Universal Thought,” becoming suffused with feeling and reality, gave place in Professor Royce's conception of God to “Universal Experience,” so “Universal Experience” has here become purified and uplifted into Universal Selfhood. Will has become more central than Thought, and Moral Purpose than Experience. In a word, the conception of God has advanced in the Gifford Lectures distinctly toward that of a Person.

Nowhere perhaps, unless it be in Fichte's works, has the nature of personality and its relation to God been so richly and sympathetically unfolded as in these two volumes—*The World and the Individual*. And yet the task so splendidly assailed is in itself more than a labor of Hercules, and the want of success in establishing the main thesis cannot but be felt by the reader. To show how the One can be the One and yet the many, the Self a Self and yet the selves—this is indeed a “stickit” problem even for a mind possessed of all the subtlety as well as the sincerity, the power as well as the persuasiveness, of the author of these extraordinary volumes.

These lectures, however, constitute a rich mine of philosophic theory. Several truths essential to our

understanding of the interpretation of personality and of knowledge, stand out in them with a definiteness and completeness of statement seldom reached in the literature of philosophy. Such, for instance, is the remarkable exposition of the distinctness and yet the relatedness of the "World of Description" and the "World of Appreciation." Professor Royce has, in these volumes, together with his analyses of consciousness in *Studies in Good and Evil*, given us an insight into the nature and meaning of the self which constitutes a most valuable contribution to the understanding of personality, and thus of Christianity as the religion of personality.

Sensitive as he is to the inner autonomy and worth of the finite selves, Professor Royce nevertheless does them an essential injustice. He endeavors to conserve their selfhood while encompassing them all within both the purview and the activity of an All-Inclusive Self. With extraordinary resourcefulness and patience he pursues the task of the adjustment of these contrasted selves, seeking to guarantee to the finite selves a freedom that will save them from the paralysis of determinism, and to the Inclusive Self a transcendence that will save him from the responsibility of the evil committed by the finite selves.

These antinomies of selfhood are, indeed, by no means peculiar to the philosophical premises of Professor Royce. Snares and pitfalls beset every theory that tries to explain with accuracy the relationship of God and man. And yet Professor Royce's monism serves to aggravate the difficulties to the highest degree. The personal God of theism is at least free from complicity with the materialities and imperfections and misdeeds of the finite selves. He may indeed seem too separate and remote from the finite selves to enable us to say with so much realism as does Professor Royce of his Absolute, "In whom we live and move and have our being."

Nevertheless, the immanence which a Perfect Person may have in imperfect, finite persons through the operation of sympathy—"grace," as the old theologians called it,—may be a truer immanence than this all-inclusive absorptionism.

At all events Professor Royce's discussion of the relations of the Self to the selves concludes with an unresolved problem. In the end, all the participants suffer from this universal Absolutism. The individual finite self suffers because he is so nearly swallowed in the Whole. To be sure, each of us possesses, according to Professor Royce, a "uniqueness of meaning" which gives him a certain worth and significance to the Universal Self; but *for himself* and *to himself* he is a zero. The conception of God suffers too in this monism, because He is, after all, not a true Person, but only the Aggregate of persons. It is in vain—is it not?—that Professor Royce assigns personality to such a Being, though defining it in these comprehensive words:

"Now from our point of view, God is a Person. Temporally viewed, His life is that of the entire realm of consciousness in so far as, in its temporal efforts toward perfection, this consciousness of the universe passes from instant to instant of the temporal order, from act to act, from experience to experience, from stage to stage. Eternally viewed, however, God's life is the infinite whole that includes this endless temporal process, and that consciously surveys it as one life. God is thus a Person, because, for our view, He is self-conscious, and because the Self of which He is conscious is a self whose eternal perfection is attained through the totality of these ethically significant temporal strivings, these processes of evolution, these linked activities of finite selves."¹

This conception of God as eternally and consciously surveying his life as one, rescues Professor Royce's Deity from being a mere symbol for the evolutionary

¹ Vol. II, p. 418.

process, or the mere totality of the striving selves. Yet can He be both the perfection and the process, both the strivings and their beholder?

IV

The Gifford Lectures were published in 1901. Between this time and the publication of his remaining books a marked change of direction, or at least of emphasis, appears in Professor Royce's thought. It is a change away from the speculative and abstract toward the ethical, the practical, and the social. A more deeply human interest pervades his later work, a closer touch with the more immediate needs of his fellow-men and of his time.

How far this was due to the stirring crusade of Pragmatism which began about this time, especially to the acute and telling thrusts at Absolutism made by Professor James, how far to the general change in the temper and interest of the age, and how far to the natural development of his own ever vital and progressive thought, it is hard to say. A rare and beautiful catholicity of mind is one of Professor Royce's finest traits. Whatever pains he may have felt from the stings and arrows of his outrageous pragmatic foes, he has manifested no resentment, made no efforts to defend Absolutism—doubtless thinking that it is able to defend itself—and without deflecting from his own course—only pausing at Professor James' death to pay him such tribute as only a great thinker can give to a comrade—he has quietly appropriated whatever was relevant in the criticism aimed against Absolutism and moved steadily on his way in the development of his own philosophy.

Now emerges in the symphony of his teaching that ethical and spiritual note destined to take its place as

the recognized and resonant refrain of his whole teaching, the principle of *Loyalty*. Here at length appeared in clear radiance a truth fundamental in the structure and quality of his thinking which all the world could grasp. It is as the "philosopher of loyalty" that Professor Royce will be most widely known. The volumes which embody this new attitude are, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908); *William James and Other Essays* (1911); *The Sources of Religious Insight* (1912); and *The Problem of Christianity* (1913).

In his *Philosophy of Loyalty*, with all its noble idealism and ethical realism, a self-refuting note was incidentally struck which it remained for the author himself tacitly to correct in his later work. I refer to the possibly unethical and irrational implication of the principle of loyalty which is there put forth, *i. e.*, insufficient discrimination as to the cause to which loyalty devotes itself. "Loyalty to loyalty" means, when carried to its logical conclusion, that the loyalty of the criminal to the gang, of an obstinate man to an opinion, of the patriot to his country "right or wrong," are all covered by the aegis of a virtue that may thus be distorted into a sanction of the most selfish and disastrous ills. Loyalty to a worthy cause, unselfish, pure, rational—as of course the author intended—alone is good and great. Professor Royce fastened upon such a cause, incomparable in its worth and beneficence, when, in his latest philosophical book, he took up again definitely the subject out of which his thinking had originally sprung and about which it had ever been revolving—Christianity. The Manchester College Lectures upon *The Problem of Christianity*, delivered at Oxford in the spring of 1913, touch the problem to the quick.

"The Problem of Christianity." Ever to the philosopher Christianity is too much a problem and too little a solution. And yet it could never be an adequate solution,

did it not also offer an ever insistent problem. Professor Royce solves the problem in terms of Loyalty. The terms are true—though perhaps Love comes even nearer than Loyalty to the heart of Christianity¹—but is his object of loyalty the real one? The Beloved Community is the *loyal* community. Yes, but to what is it loyal? To itself, says Professor Royce, and no one would wish to contradict him. But what is the secret of its loyalty? Who created the Community? Loyalty does not spring objectless and motiveless from the void. The Community is loyal to itself because loyal first to one who created it and holds it together.

It is difficult to understand how Professor Royce could have so far failed to recognize the potency of the Christ personality as the cohesive centre of the Church. It is true he makes a place for the Indwelling Christ—the Spirit of the Community—but not for the incarnation of the Spirit in Jesus. It was the incarnate Word who gave origin and impetus, concreteness and unity, to the early church. Nor has the personality, thus vital at the outset, however obscured, ever been lost in the subsequent life of the Church. In answer to the question, Who was the founder of Christianity? Professor Royce replies, Not Jesus, nor Paul; we first find the essence of it in the Pauline churches. In other words, he leaves the question of its founder unanswered. To leave it unanswered is to leave the problem of Christianity unanswered.

V

What is the conception of God in the Oxford Lectures? The answer cannot be a definite one, for there is no distinct and clearly apprehensible teaching upon this topic, either in the Bross Lectures upon *The Sources of*

¹ Loyalty represents the *will* side of love; love includes both spontaneous and volitional elements.

Religious Insight or in *The Problem of Christianity*. The very term "God," so frequent and so pregnant with meaning in earlier volumes, is rarely found in the later. Not that the author has rejected his former point of view. Indeed, in the lecture on the *Doctrine of Signs*, the theory of "Absolute Voluntarism" is strongly reaffirmed. Yet the emphasis has changed. Manifestly the conception of God has passed into a new stage of development. Is it a more potent conception, or not?

Throughout *The Problem of Christianity* a distinction is made between the Community and the Spirit of the Community, and at one point at least a third distinction is suggested—namely, that of "Charity itself, the love of the Community by all its members, and of the members by the Community."¹ Definitively or inferentially, the reader is led to associate God with each and all of these—the Community, the Spirit of the Community, and the Love of the Community. Here is a striking correspondence—though Professor Royce does not himself point it out, and possibly does not himself recognize it—with the threefold trinitarian distinction, God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the Community there is thus always, even when viewed as the Universal Community, or Humanity, something spiritual and ideal. This it is which sets Professor Royce's Community-loyalty far apart from and above Positivism and every other form of the worship of Humanity. It is never the Community in its empirical nature or its mass aspect, that Professor Royce presents to us as divine and worthy of devoted loyalty, but always the Community as an *Ideal* in process of realization. This Ideal Community, we are led to infer, is practically what we have all along been ignorantly worshipping. Whom therefore we have ignorantly worshipped, He, or It, is declared unto us.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 192.

The actual Community corresponding to this burning inner ideal, Professor Royce admits, nowhere exists. The Community, though a Community of memory, is still more a Community of hope, of expectation.¹ The Church is an invisible ideal rather than an actual institution.

“For the true Church is still a sort of ideal challenge to the faithful, rather than an already finished institution—a call upon men for a heavenly quest, rather than a present possession of humanity. ‘Create me’—this is the word that the Church, viewed as an idea, addresses to mankind.”²

Thus does this “institutionalist,” as he is amusingly termed by Canon Inge in the *Hibbert Journal*,³ describe the Church. Institutional he is only in the sense of one who cries, “Ring in the *Church* that is to be.”

It is impossible not to feel that this divinity of the Community is, in effect, a form of the doctrine of Divine Immanence, and that it only lacks the supplementary truth of transcendence to become a fresh and illuminating expression of Christian Theism. And yet true and complete transcendence is never predicated of God by Professor Royce. The Community has indeed a kind of *immanent* transcendence, so to speak. It transcends itself, holding within itself ever the seed of its own perfection. But this possibility of perfection is never conceived as coming from Above, from the Father of lights. If, instead of being simply the Spirit of the Community, this Spirit were only conceived as the Spirit *in* the Community, having its source *above* the Community, we should be able to recognize at once the Holy Spirit, the Indwelling Christ of Christian experience; but this distinction Professor Royce does not permit us to make.

¹ II, p. 51.

² I, p. 54.

³ July, 1914.

Very closely does this untrammelled thinker approximate to the theistic conception, especially in the fascinating lecture on *The Realm of Grace*. But always he stops just short of it and retreats to his stronghold of a society of individuals, a community which he prefers to call *superpersonal*—although he is willing to call it a person, “if by person you mean a live unity of will, of love, and of deed.”¹ No one surely would object to that definition of person, if only again that unity is in and of and for itself as well as in and for others. In other words, to be a person the Divine Person must, like the human, be an entelechy—an end in Himself. That is, according to Christian theology, God is not only immanent but transcendent.² According to this conception a society having a composite consciousness cannot be in the full sense a person, nor a person a society.

Universal Thought, Universal Experience, Universal Selfhood—this, roughly speaking, is Professor Royce’s ladder to perfection. Manifestly it is a progressive approach to that which for Christian theology is most essential in Deity—Personality. And yet the goal is never reached. For this Universal Person is not only an incomplete Person but worse, since there is limitation and evil in Him—the limitation and evil of all the selves composing Him.

In *The Problem of Christianity* Professor Royce partly overcomes this objection by identifying God, not with universal humanity but with those groups, or that inclusive Group, which includes the best in the human persons—the “Universal Community.” But even so, not one of these groups alone, nor all together, can be re-

¹ I, p. 352.

² It is unfortunate that, as Professor George F. Moore has pointed out to the writer, the term *immanence*, in its exact derivative sense, precludes transcendence. That which *remains in* a thing obviously cannot transcend it. Yet what can the theologian do in such a case but assert that meanings transcend terms?

garded as having perfect or fulfilled personality. Limitation and evil exist in even the highest, the Christian Community.

There is no such thing, then, in fine, as Fulfilled Personality, the Perfect Person, according to Professor Royce—except in idea. If one is content with this conclusion, as satisfying either the intellect or the heart, he has here the highest formulation of his creed. But let him not infer that this is the only God rationally defensible. For out of the intuitive insight of the soul, out of the deeper implications of the moral nature, out of the teleology of the universe, natural and spiritual, there arises a conviction of the reality of a Perfect Person, high and lifted up, yet whose Presence fills the temple of humanity. This conviction of God has possessed the major mind of humanity in all the thinking ages, including our own. It has appealed more strongly than any other to reason as well as to faith.

VI

In the second series of the Manchester Lectures, dealing with the metaphysical aspect of Christianity, Professor Royce brings forward a conception in which Philosophy and Christianity throw light upon each other and to whose elucidation he has been giving further attention in a recent course of lectures at the University of California—namely, the principle of *interpretation*, involved in what he has termed the *Triadic Theory of Knowledge*.

The Community is a community of interpretation. Its most useful member is the interpreter. Knowledge of self and of others is interpretative knowledge. The most serviceable function in the life of the Community is that of interpretation or mediation. Christianity is

a religion of interpretation. It is a "Doctrine of Signs."

This is no new principle, to be sure, in Royce's thinking. It runs through all his work. Its deepest and most searching application to Christianity had already been made in the last of three addresses upon *What is Vital in Christianity*, given at the Phillips Brooks House at Harvard University in the spring of 1909, and published in *The Harvard Theological Review* and later in the volume, *William James and Other Essays*. In the last of these addresses, having shown the shallowness of that conception of Christianity which regards it as a culmination of cosmic evolutionism and leaves on one side its ministry of reconciliation, in words that touch the deeps of human experience the speaker concluded thus, concerning the meaning of comradeship in sorrow:

"God wins perfection through expressing Himself in a finite life and triumphing over and through its finitude. And our sorrow is God's sorrow. God means to express Himself by winning us through the very triumph over evil to unity with the perfect life, and therefore our fulfilment, like our existence, is due to the sorrow and the triumph of God Himself. These two theses express, I believe, what is vital in Christianity."

This truth finds still ampler expression in the lectures on *Time and Guilt* and *Atonement* in the first series of the Oxford Lectures.

It has thus been given to Professor Royce to recall to the mind of our time, from the vantage-ground of philosophy, one of the great realities of Christian faith, too far overlooked in the hasty superficialism of present-day theology—the doctrine of Atonement.

Yet here once more Professor Royce pauses upon the hither side of a great truth as Christian theology has, in its larger insights, conceived it. Not merely from

within the community but from *above* comes interpretation. Incarnation, according to Christianity, means, not simply that the Spirit of the Community incarnates itself, but that the Spirit that created the Community is also its Savior, entering into a lower order of spiritual life than its own to inform and redeem it.

“As individuals we are lost,” says Professor Royce, and we assent. We are saved, he affirms, by coming into right relation with the Community. Yes, we answer, but by coming into right relationship not primarily with the Community, but with the Spirit of the Community, with God, and through Him into relation with the Community. In other words, the primary and fundamental redemptive relationship is that between the soul and God—mediated by the Community. In this conception the only dyadic relation which is “dangerous” is, as a friend of mine has remarked, not that between a pair of persons as such, but that which has not become “triadic” through the presence of the Universal Interpreter who was in Christ—yes, and in every loving member of the Community in the degree of his sacrificial spirit—reconciling the world unto Himself, and thus to itself. It is such a God, “above all and through all and in you all” who alone satisfies our need,

“That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto Him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To One that with us works, and trust.”

VII

In an all too rapid and inadequate way we have endeavored to follow the course of Professor Royce's thought as it relates to Christianity, from the clear cold springs of its earlier critical and speculative beginnings along the deepening and broadening channel of

its profound study of the nature of God and the relationship of the One and the Many, to the later period of its calm and fertilizing flow into the fields of great social interests, where it encircles the broad meadows of human fellowship, waters the roots of loyalty, and interprets some of the deeper truths of Christianity.

It is quite too cheap and professional for the philosopher to dispose of this original and resourceful contribution to philosophy as a form of Hegelianism. It will not stay within these limitations. Or for the theologian to set it down as an insidious form of scepticism or pantheism. It is far too genuinely informed with the spirit of the article, "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints." Throughout the later volumes indeed, barring the philosophical phraseology, the very spirit of Christianity, as Paul interprets it, is reflected. In the entire literature concerning Paul, it may be said in passing, few have interpreted his mind with so keen and sympathetic a discernment as has this unconventionalized Christian.

Whatever further amplification or modification this fertile and inexhaustible mind may give to his philosophy, it stands before us as a noble and impressive whole, demanding to be evaluated and put to usury. It would be a grave loss not to honor with criticism as well as with application to life, a philosophy of so large and vital significance. It is ripe for interpretation, for testing, and for food—food for the many as well as for the few.

It is somewhat strange in view of the position which Professor Royce holds in the philosophical world, the deep and extensive influence he has exercised as a teacher, the originality and scope of his contribution to the literature of philosophy, that so few attempts have been made either to expound or to estimate his philosophy as a whole—especially from the view-point of theology.

Eucken and Bergson have in Royce a worthy American compeer in the great task of spiritualizing life. His philosophy, like theirs, makes for the regnancy of the Ideal. It is a deeply religious philosophy. As time throws it into perspective it will be seen how truly great a philosophy it is—great in its success, greater still in unfulfilled endeavor. For it may well be that we have in Royceanism the last and most splendid—yet futile—effort to construct an enduring temple of Monism. The structure as such is not only incomplete but insecure—not so much from assault from without as from a general abandonment of the monistic position and from self-criticism. For the very dialectic of the philosophy itself, the inner strife of its contending principles, refusing to submit to a foreordained synthesis, has adjudged itself and led to that extraordinary self-expansion in Professor Royce's system which has brought his thought ever closer to the throbbing human interests and problems of our time and made him so great an "interpreter." In other words, Professor Royce has tacitly passed judgment upon his own system by constantly surpassing it. It is true that his whole work has a marked unity of purpose and movement, but it is the unity of a development that is too large to be self-fulfilled.

It is this very self-transcendence, therefore, this constant advance, that gives us the assurance that in this philosophy we have that which no closed system can rival—a philosophy full of fructifying ideas, bound together by a constantly enlarging conception of the world, the self, and God. We of the theological guild, who are too easily content with conventional ideas, have much to learn from the philosophy of Professor Royce, and, whatever the degree of our dissent, should be eager to acknowledge our large indebtedness to him.