

JOSIAH ROYCE.

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The year 1916 has seen the death of two great thinkers—I mean Wilhelm Windelband of Heidelberg and Josiah Royce of Harvard. It is a rare coincidence that they have not only followed each other to their grave but in their thinking also they stand in close relations—for Windelband is not only one of the greatest writers on the History of Philosophy but a great thinker as well—the new light which he with Rickert threw on current philosophical speculations being later on developed by Munsterburg and Royce.

But it is not my purpose today to enter into the metaphysics of Windelband. I shall only endeavour here to set out in simple form some of the salient points in the life and teachings of Josiah Royce.

In Philosophy, Royce stands midway between the Intellectualism of the Neo-Hegelians and the Pragmatism of James and seeks to reconcile them both in the conception of an universal spirit whose thought is his will and whose will is his thought. Royce calls his philosophy 'Absolute Pragmatism' and believes with them that our ideas do not consist of pure images, they are instruments serving special ends and must therefore be judged in relation to these ends. But while Pragmatism looks at the moral law from the point of view of empiricism and sets up the useful, the convenient and the opportune as the only criterion of truth, Royce differs from them in according a higher place to the end and absolute fulness of the Divine Will, which can never find adequate expression in finite consciousness and its ends. Incomplete and contingent truths are thus subordinated to an eternal and absolute truth-value which is not dependent upon any individual but is based upon the universal consciousness. This difference marks him out essentially from the Pluralists and the writers of the contingent school—Le Roy, Boutroux, Bergson and others and shows his fundamental agreement with the Absolutists. But it must be remembered that though he has much in common with them he is not one of the 'thin' philo-

sophers but is rather of the 'thick' class, to use James's significant expressions.

Royce does not accept any of the three meanings of reality given by Realism, Mysticism and Critical Rationalism. His conception of being is a synthesis of all three and a most monumental attempt to solve the riddle of the universe from the idealistic side. The absolute according to him is not an empty unit external to time but includes all temporal processes in their infinite variety. Everything that lives and develops in time exists in God, it is neither absorbed nor destroyed but is preserved in its individual Physiognomy; finite consciousness just as it exists in ourselves with its strivings and defects, its mistakes, its temporality and limitations, is all present from the absolute point of view, but it is seen rather with the solution of its problems, the fulfilment of its ends etc. The Absolute is not an empty abstraction but a concrete reality who knows everything we know and as we know it, our experience is not transformed in order that it may become one with the Divine Life, but persists in that life, wearing the same concrete aspect as it does in us. Royce thus rejects the purely logical and static aspect of reality which is the bane of all intellectualism and does not like it deny all finite experience and becoming. While he on the one hand does not accept the contingency of the pragmatic schools, he on the other hand rejects the utter barrenness of intellectualism which makes the finite mind and nature absolutely meaningless,—by showing that eternity does not annihilate succession in time, but embraces it all within itself in its infinite present, the finite world of becoming, and mind with its imperfections and errors.

His system is thus one which avoids the onesided errors of the opposing schools of modern thought and attempts to reconcile their conflicting claims in the conception of an Absolute which does not annul the finite and render all development illusory.

So much for the philosophy of Royce. His practical life was also like his philosophy harmonious and sweet. In fact he was one of those few great men who like Socrates and Green practised what they preached. He was as simple as a child and kindness was the air he breathed. Three years ago when the University of Oxford

presented him with an honorary degree he donned himself in his scarlet robes and with child-like glee summoned a number of children to look at him !

Egotism was a thing wholly unknown to him and he was equally devoted to his philosophy and to his friends. His heart was so full of human milk that he could never hurt or injure a fellow human being. It is told that when he was in England last, on one occasion he had trouble with his American correspondence and had to go through some irritating formalities at the post office. One document he absolutely refused to sign, and supported his refusal by expounding the whole philosophy of international relations to the immense astonishment of the officials. At last the lady-clerk said to him, "Well sir, if you do not sign, I shall get into trouble." "My dear young lady," said Royce, "rather than see you in trouble I would sign any and every document which King George might choose to put into my hands. Give me the paper."

Such was the man—was Josiah Royce of whom it might well be said that he had not died even in his death.

বিবেকানন্দ-স্তোত্র ।

অজ্ঞান-পঙ্ক-নিমগ্ন যারামোহাবৃত
মানবেরে যেই বীর করিল জাগ্রত ;
যাহার চরণ-রেণু পাইবার তরে
সুদূর পাশ্চাত্যবাসী আসিছে বেলুড়ে ।
স্মরিয়া "বিবেকানন্দ";—গুরুদত্ত নামে
ভারত-যুবক সেই "নরেন্দ্রে"রে নমো ॥

বাসন্তী চন্দ্রিকাসম যশঃ সুবিমল
ব্যাগু হইয়াছে যার অগংগণল ।
'কোটি চন্দ্র/জিনি যার বদনের শোভা
শরীর সুন্দরকান্তি যুনি-যনোলোভা' ।