every Jamesian scholar has made glowing remarks about James' vibrant, muscular, arresting style, Ruf has given us a sustained treatment of it, especially "what James's style accomplishes" (xvi).

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Nearly fifty years ago Stuart Gerry Brown referred to Royce's The Problem of Christianity as "his most important, as surely as it is his most neglected book" (The Social Philosophy of Josiah Royce). It has taken until now for the academic world to acknowledge the former and redress the latter. This is achieved by Frank M. Oppenheim's impressive Royce's Mature Philosophy of Religion.

Over the years there have been quite a few articles on Royce's religious philosophy (for example, John Wright Buckham's "The Contribution of Professor Royce to Christian Thought" and John McCreary's "The Religious Philosophy of Josiah Royce" -- neither of which are cited by Oppenheim) as well as chapters of books by major philosophers devoted to Royce's The Problem of Christianity (for example, the last three chapters of Gabriel Marcel's Royce's Metaphysics -- which Oppenheim merely cites as an "insightful study"). Oppenheim's book, however, is the first full-scale analysis of Josiah Royce's The Problem of Christianity.

The book is divided into five parts and ends with an epilogue on the importance that Royce's mature philosophy of religion can have on studying the problems common to the world religions. Part I (five chapters) describes Royce's development as an interpreter of problematic Christianity. Part II (five chapters) recounts Royce's exploration of the human interests that produce religious experiences. Part III (six chapters) introduces and explains Royce's various methods of interpretation. Part IV (two chapters) explicates the importance that loyalty and community have for Christianity. Part V (three chapters) consists of Oppenheim's critical appreciation of Royce's mature religious philosophy. There is a 6 page Appendix that correlates the various editions of The Problem of Christianity.

Reviewing a book such as Oppenheim's can be intimidating for one who is not a scholar on the subject. Yet that possibility raises a relevant question: for whom is this book intended and is it worth their attention? Certainly, those who are Royce scholars will find much that is captivating, a few things that
are debatable, and a level of erudition that commands respect. As for those who are interested in American philosophy and its history, Oppenheim supplies bountiful instances and examples of Royce's relationship with his peers (such as being critical of James, appreciative of Peirce, and selective of Dewey). However, for those who are interested primarily in Christianity, in world religions or in philosophy of religion, the relevance and value of Oppenheim's book is doubtful.

One might wonder how this could be in view of (1) Royce's *The Problem of Christianity* being the centerpiece of Oppenheim's work; (2) Oppenheim's conclusion that Royce makes a definite contribution to studying problems common to world religions; (3) the very title of this book. Each will be examined in turn.

First, from the fact that Oppenheim takes Royce's study of Christianity as his subject, it does not follow that those interested in Christianity will be rewarded for their time spent with this book. This is less a fault with Oppenheim than it is a limitation of Royce's analysis. Royce restricts his analysis and directs his methods exclusively to three issues of Christianity: the community of the faithful, original sin and redemption. For most Christians, and certainly for most Christian scholars, "Royce's Christianity is rather tepid because of his failure to pay enough attention to Christology, mystical theology, and the history of the Church" (Vincent Buranelli, *Josiah Royce*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964, p. 142). For a contrary view see Robert S. Corrington's *The Community of Interpreters* (Reviewed by Stephen Kennett in SAAP Newsletter #59, June 1991).

Second, while Oppenheim claims that those interested in world religions will find much in Royce "for discovering new ways of studying religious problems" (346), this judgment is predicated on the assumption that the world's great religions have a shared doctrine, a common creed. The only support offered for this highly debatable conjecture is a quotation from Bernard Lonergan's *Method in Theology*.

Third, what Oppenheim apparently means by philosophy of religion is not at most in the field (especially those who write textbooks) mean. This is not to deny that Royce authored a philosophy of Christianity. It is, however, to suggest that one can accept Royce's achievement without implying that Royce addresses and comes to terms with the traditional philosophical problems of religion (such as divine attributes, religious language, proofs of God's existence, faith or reason, religious experience, miracles, salvation and immortality, religion and science, natural and moral evil, the sacred and holy, sources of and standards for morality, religious pluralism and religious truth).

Despite what may seem to be a negative review, I am only
faulting Oppenheim's description or implied content of his book: it is neither about Christianity nor about Royce's general philosophy of religion, and it has little relevance to world religions.

If one wishes a preview of Oppenheim's sensitive and sympathetic treatment of Royce (dealing with similar issues to those in his book) see "A Roycean Response to the Challenge of Individualism" (Beyond Individualism: Toward A Retrieval Of Moral Discourse In America, ed. by Donald L. Gelpi, 1989). He does a nice job tying Royce's insights to the American culture that is central to Robert Bellah's et. al. Habits of the Heart.

Bruce B. Suttle


To those who find the fashionable jargon of "texts" and "audience" illuminating, this book will seem a fresh and original interpretation of Emerson. However, if this talk of "alterity" and "testuality" strikes one as mere jargon, then this book, however perceptive at times, will seem mainly "sophistry and illusion". Professor Michael seems to know with absolute certainty just what 'Skepticism" is. "Skepticism" is the philosophical tradition of Montaigne, Hume et al. Prof. Michael also seems to envisage "Skepticism" as the vague, amorphous mass of all concrete "doubt". It is as if one could speak of "doubt" that is not a doubt about something, or of "relation" that is not a relation to something. When he speaks of "the Other", one is tempted to ask: Other-than-what? We are told that for "Skepticism" (or for Hume) the "self", or "identity", is relational. The Self is not an "Archimedean Point". The "transparent eyeball" is a mere nullity. Emerson, of course, straddles the line between Literature and Philosophy. In academic "turf wars" it is not clear where he belongs. Professor Michael teaches English. He seems to know more "Philosophy" than most literary scholars. (He has read Cavell.) I am not sure if philosophers will find this book of interest. He sets out to attack the "accepted view" of Emerson (as stated in Whichner's classic Freedom and Fate). For him, Emerson is not merely the "untroubled spokesman for American individualism" (57). Of course, Emerson's prose is not a model of simplicity and clarity. That is part of its charm. His "system" is more implicit than explicit. Yet what Prof. Michael presents as the "accepted view" seems often a mere "straw man". The "accepted view" may ignore Emerson's "doubts" and "anxieties". But for a certain philosophical position, they can be seen as mere "epiphenomena". Does the "accepted view" oversimplify Emerson? Sometimes, it is a "gift to be simple". The "complexities" Prof. Michael finds intriguing may be "irrelevant"