

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW

THE INFINITE NEW AND OLD.

TO the technical student of philosophy, one of the most interesting and important parts of Professor Royce's recent book, *The World and the Individual*, is the discussion of the infinite in the essay supplementary to the first volume.¹ This is a very suggestive piece of work, and whatever one may think of the net result for metaphysics, one must admire the ingenuity with which Professor Royce applies the notion of a self-representative system to the philosophical concept of the infinite. For my own part, while I am indebted to this essay for directing my attention to the very interesting researches of Dedekind, Cantor, Bolzano, etc., I am not convinced that we have thereby been much advanced towards the proof of the existence of an actually infinite and absolute mind, or that much light has been shed on the interior constitution of such a mind. I propose first to state some of my difficulties in regard to this "new" infinite as a preliminary to some remarks on the meaning of the notion of the infinite in general.

Self-representation is the fundamental characteristic of the new infinite, and numberless illustrations can, of course, be offered of self-representative series. For example, the map of a country, to be perfect, must contain a representation of the spot on which it itself exists, and, hence, a representation of its own representation of the country, again a representation of this self-representation, etc., . . . without end. A picture-package of cereal, to be perfect, must have a picture of the picture on the package, etc., . . . without end. More abstract illustrations are drawn from mathematics.

¹ See also Professor Royce's article in the *Hibbert Journal*, Vol. I, No. 1.