The Correspondence of William James



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著者:William James

出版者:University of Virginia Press

出版时间:2002-5-22

装帧:Hardcover

isbn:9780813920610

Consisting of some 572 letters, with another 460 calendared, this tenth volume in a projected series of twelve offers a complete accounting of William James's known correspondence -- with family, friends, and colleagues -- from the beginning of 1902 through March 1905. For James these were hopeful years of recovery. The end of the depressing cure at Nauheim, the successful conclusion of the arduous Gifford Lectures in Edinburgh, the reaching maturity and independence of his two eldest children, and the gradual withdrawal from teaching responsibilities at Harvard allowed him to hope that he would at long last present his philosophical message to the world in the shape of a treatise on metaphysics. Philosophy was in a state of unrest, with old alliances breaking up and new ones forming, and was ripe for a more fruitful reformulation of its traditional questions. Intellectualism, philosophical and scientific, was waning, making room for the emergence of an empiricism congenial to humane values. As reflected in the letters of this period, James comes to recognize that Dewey and the Chicago school were his allies and that the Frenchman Henri Bergson was moving in the same direction. Consequently, Bergson is the major new correspondent of the present volume, and, because he emerges during this period as James's leading supporter, Ferdinand Schiller is another dominant correspondent. Often boisterous and irreverent, Schiller saw himself as a general about to overwhelm an aged and sleepy, but still

dangerous, enemy. James, in the meantime, had to call upon all of his diplomatic skills to keep on good terms with the people Schiller irritated, while remaining Schiller's friend and defender. Scholars will find much material in this volume that will help them judge whether the common view of pragmatism as a capricious subjectivism largely reflected a widespread lack of respect for Schiller. While continuing his involvement with anti-imperialism, James takes a more critical stance toward existing social conditions during this period, proclaiming his admiration for the small and insisting on the connection between great size and social evil. In 1904 he tours the American South. There are hints that he was acting as a scout for his brother Henry, which perhaps caused William James to see more of the meanness and shabbiness of the region than he would have otherwise. Along with Bergson and Schiller, prominent intellectuals represented in this volume include ThA(c)odore Flournoy, Wincenty Lutoslawski, Carl Stumpf, Hugo MA1/4nsterberg, Josiah Royce, Charles Sanders Peirce, Oliver Lodge, John Dewey, George Herbert Palmer, Charles William Eliot, James Mark Baldwin, and

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