

tries I have not visited, few classes of people I have not known, few notable books I have not read."

In the preface we read: "What I am concerned to do is to find the exact truth of things, and to connect them into a coherent whole." This is a pretty large order, but we are gratified to note that the author has been able to fill it:

"So far I had come. By working diligently all my life, by asking, by seeking, by knocking, I had discovered a great many things, and I knew that all I had discovered was true."

"Then suddenly a thought touched my heart, it shook, and all things flashed into being. Every vague wandering thought that had gone from sight came back in new organic form. I saw all that I had wanted to see for so many years."

It is not surprising to learn that since the time mentioned above he has "been lonesome" in his thinking. The suspensive art with which he promises, pointing ahead to some delectable revelation, is worthy of "Tom Jones" itself. And so no wonder one closes the book disappointed; for, expecting a cloud-burst, one resents the scarcity of really good showers.

It may be well to quote a rather extended passage from the first chapter in order to give the author's point of view. The following will serve admirably:

"Jesus the World Thinker was in the world to think for it, and to tell it whence it came and whither it was bound; how so to live as to accelerate that purpose which is in the world and for the world; but with one exception — the writer of the fourth Gospel — no one even partially understood. The life of Jesus and his thought were misinterpreted. From out of his teachings a few simple truths were taken; all the rest were misinterpreted, and thought was once more fossilised and dead. All research was persecuted and destroyed.

"The very little that was partially understood of what Jesus was and said was hidden in a mass of superstition, and called Christianity. This was the faith that I was taught when young. Briefly, it is this:

"A God all-powerful, all-wise, all-loving, made the world, no one knows for why. It is a failure, full of misery, sin, and suffering. So he sent His Son to save it by his blood, because God had to be propitiated for the sin of His own creation. Jesus was born of miracle, lived in miracle, died in miracle, a denial of God's own rule of law. He taught that the world is evil, and we must escape from it. We must be innocent and pure, abjure the world, and when we die those who succeed will go to heaven to live for ever uselessly because they are unfit for any work, and there is no work to do. The majority will burn in hell. Their symbol is that of death, a crucifix or cross.

"I did not believe a word of it.

"Even as a boy I saw instinctively and very dimly a great many things.

"No God would sacrifice His Son to Himself. He might send His Son to war knowing he would be killed. That is a different matter. But in that case how could He be all-mighty?

"I saw that the world was beautiful, and that if it

FINDING THE TRUTH OF THINGS.*

"The World Soul" is a queer book — an amusing, amazing, suggestive, tantalizing, much-promising and little-satisfying, sophomoric, prophetic book.

To begin at the beginning, the title is prejudicial. And the prejudice is almost justified. For though there are plenty of definite, concrete things in the book, the title and all pertaining directly thereto remain a bit of non-luminous and non-caloric rhetoric. Even the glossary, introduced for the benefit of those who are not familiar with the terminology of Mr. Fielding-Hall's system, avails nothing. "Soul" is defined as "emotion," and "world" is made identical with "trinity." The Trinity is composed of Nature, Soul, and Wisdom. So "World Soul" is mathematically the emotion of Nature, Emotion, and Wisdom. Simple cancellation makes Nature and Wisdom equal zero, — a lamentable conclusion. Mere vagueness will no longer be cashed in for profundity.

Another feature that may disparage the real value of the book is the author's cool assurance that he has exhausted knowledge and completed wisdom. Even though "The World Soul" had done this considerable thing, it would behoove the writer not to be so fully conscious of it.

"It has been my good fortune to live a life of extraordinary variety. There are few things I have not felt or seen, few occupations I have not tried or been connected with, few things I have not done, few coun-

* THE WORLD SOUL. By H. Fielding-Hall. New York: Henry Holt & Co.

was not entirely happy it was because of defects which existed to be overcome, for the whole value of life lay in overcoming them and going on. . . . I didn't want to go to either heaven or hell. I wanted life, and so did all others I knew."

This passage will orientate the book, attracting or repelling the reader. It will be seen that the author's arraignment of Christianity is slightly unfair; nevertheless, many thoughtful Christians will feel that the exaggeration is but venial.

The first half of the work is devoted to a history of his own thought development, some of it fresh and some of it stale; and a résumé of his former books, which it is to be presumed are very much more diffuse than the present culminating volume. They are, "The Soul of a People," "The Hearts of Men," "A People at School," "The Inward Light," "One Immortality," and "The Sons of Time."

The chief value of this book—although such value appears to be incidental—is the humanizing light thrown upon the life of Jesus. Utterly freed from the trammels of creedal Christianity, Mr. Fielding-Hall professes and manifests the utmost reverence, amounting to worship, for Jesus. To those who find comfort in the humanity of Jesus, in his appeal as a brother in an actual and not a mystical sense, and are unable to appreciate his vicarious services as a god, there will be much pleasure and illumination in the later chapters, especially that entitled "Crucifixion." The view herein presented, while not novel, exhibits many original features in its details. It is in brief that Jesus was "neurotic" (an atrociously infelicitous word). He did not die on the cross in three hours, but fainted. His appearances later were thus entirely natural, and his early death soon after was just as naturally caused by the tremendous shock he had experienced. This is not all thoroughly consistent and satisfactory,—notably the supposition that Philip, the writer of the Fourth Gospel and the only disciple who had any intellectual sympathy for Jesus, knew all the time that Jesus had not died. Still there is immense suggestiveness in the chapter, enough to make the writer's promise of a life of Jesus very welcome.

There are certain surprising omissions, considering the point of view and the frank, simple, unfrilled way of thinking on these questions that the author follows. He handles the birth and death of Jesus directly and without reserve; on the other hand he nowhere makes mention of the stupendous fact that Jesus, whom he conceives to be the type and contain the essence of humanity, our brother, tempted and joying and

sorrowing in all points as we are tempted and joy and suffer, lacked the most vital human experiences. He was a celibate. I suppose it is a biological truism that marriage and parenthood test the capacity of human joy and sorrow as nothing else in life can. Celibate thinkers have here and there been great, but have always been incomplete. However high and deep and broad their ken, there has been a height and depth and breadth unreached. "They twain shall be one flesh" is a literal biological law. A differentiated sex is disinherited from some of life's original knowledge; to realize complete wisdom sex must be added to sex. A perfectly happy unmarried Shakespeare or Lincoln would have been distinctly less; a perfectly unhappy, unmarried Browning would not have been much.

It remains to say that for the most part the author seems keen, honest, unfettered, and unfettering. His style is simple, clear, and striking wherever his hobby of the World Soul is in the background. He may not have solved all mysteries, but that is not greatly to be regretted. There would be no heritage of mystery for the future if "The World Soul" had paid all claims.

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