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All matter for publication, and all communications to the Editors, should be addressed to the
REV. J. A. TURNBULL, 316 Bathurst Street, Toronto.

All remittances, and all communications of a business nature, should be addressed to THE J. E.
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SOCIALISM.

II. THE INDIVIDUAL AS A FACTOR IN SOCIETY.

THE distinction drawn between revolution and evolution will help in contrasting two views of the individual. The first is negative, opposed to all forms of regulation or control; the second, positive, seeking to give the individual a share in the control, and to widen the field for the exercise of his powers in harmony with others.

The negative attitude is what is usually in mind when individualism is referred to. We may term this pure individualism, or abstract individualism, and we shall be assisted in our classification if at once we set over against it the opposite extreme.

Pure individualism will have the individual absolutely uncontrolled. The other extreme would be to have the individual absolutely controlled. This we may term pure despotism. Between these great extremes we may easily range the various theories and beliefs concerning the proper relation of the individual to society, of the governed or ungoverned to the government.

Of pure individualism we may notice two types—the passive, eastern, and the active, western. Of these the eastern is the most individualistic, the most consistent. It is entirely self-included; it will have nothing to do with others; it will not even complain about them; nay, it will not even notice their existence at all. It will seek “Nirvana”; it will counsel indifference and quietism.