

OMNISCIENCE UNMASKED

The omniscient Doctor Crane has given himself away. On Saturday, November 14, the St. Paul Dispatch published one of his oracular editorials entitled, "What We Do Not Know." Among other Delphic utterances we note the following: "We do not know what anything is. Nobody knows. Probably nobody ever will know. . . We do not know what God is, nor what religion, fear, hope, courage and goodness are. . . We do not know what we ourselves are, our real person, our ego, nor whether it continues after death, or goes out like a candle. . . We may believe, but we cannot know. . . The things we positively know are of small consequence."

What has happened to the Doctor? Are all his editorials, after all, of small consequence? It is not of small consequence to know the meaning of the editorial "we." We know it and we know it definitely. Behind it the Doctor has hitherto modestly hidden his omniscience. Now he uses it to display, to confess his ignorance. But he feels lonely; the editorial "we" is cold comfort to a man who knows nothing. So he must find company. He tells us that "nobody" knows. But, Doctor, how do you know that? Who gave you the right to speak for anybody except the editorial "we"? Some of the shreds and dispatches of omniscience cling round the oracle even while it confesses that it knows as little as sensible people always suspected. This oracle will not be dumb henceforth: but it is bound to speak for itself and for itself alone.

A shallow agnosticism is popular just now. Start out by assuming that nobody knows if there be a God, a future life, a difference between good and evil, virtue and vice. It will save the trouble of thought and study for writer as well as for reader. It is pleasant to be able to go ahead and do what you like, since nobody knows what matters or if anything matters. Pose as an agnostic and you can say nothing, provided you can say it smartly, though not quite so smartly as a circus clown. The poor clown does not know much: but he knows that several people know more and have clearer heads than himself; he does not tell the world that it knows nothing because he, the wisest of men, has fooled himself into dreaming that he knows nothing.

The child who learns his catechism knows a good deal about God, his own soul, eternity. This knowledge grows and is extended as one gives time and attention to the study of theology. It is real knowledge. It is based partly upon the unerring word of God, partly upon the intuitions and inferences of reason. By reason man can prove that God exists and is good, truthful, all-perfect; that Christ is His Messenger to teach men divine truth; that Christ is with His Church, as He promised to be. All this is knowledge acquired by rigorously exact scientific processes. It is not without mysteries or difficulties but mysteries and difficulties do not invalidate clear and certain knowledge.

The man who has not studied these matters has no right to pose as the omniscient oracle about them. Because Calvinism has repelled some men, it does not follow that Calvin's horrible caricature is the only possible concept of God. Blind, unquestioning, traditional prejudice against the Church may possibly excuse a man who knows himself to be ignorant and thinks that everybody else is as ignorant as he is. But it does not excuse him for his pompous oracular tone. If Dr. Crane had an honest effort to master a textbook of sound philosophy and failed, the confession of failure would be intelligible, but before he has done so, to pose as the oracle on all human thought and knowledge is to emulate the performances of the quack medicine man. The neglect of the mental training which the study of sound philosophy provides, is painfully apparent in all this vague and loose declamation. If the oracle said, "I know nothing," and then said nothing, we should all be truly grateful.—Catholic Bulletin.

ON THE BATTLE LINE

THE FIGHT FOR THE CHANNEL PORTS

(By William Ridgale, Correspondent of The London Daily News) London, Dec. 4.—Fierce fighting is now taking place along a considerable portion of the battle-line. The Germans have anticipated the concerted forward movement of the allies of making a spirited attack themselves. The allies have not been taken by surprise; never was an army more ready to defend itself. The allies are now in a position to bid their time, and the new German offensive will probably not cause them to change their well-matured plans.

In the dark hours before dawn yesterday morning a large force of Germans crossed the flood waters of the Yser by means of big broad rafts. But before dawn came the plot was discovered, and when daybreak did arrive the artillery of the allies met the advancing Germans with devastating effect. Yet in spite of their losses these Germans, brave even to madness, still essayed the crossing. They were partially

covered by the heavy cannonade of their field artillery and until midway still perished in their plan. Several rafts were upset in midstream by the fire of the French guns, and great numbers of Germans were drowned as well as shot. Once again the Yser claimed heavy toll; once again German blood stained its waters crimson. The attack eventually ceased after the Germans had suffered immense losses in men and mitrailleuses, but the artillery kept up a determined bombardment of the allied positions meeting with a vigorous, well directed reply.

GERMANS USE A NEW GUN

As I have mentioned in previous despatches, the Germans have withdrawn their heavy artillery on account of the muddy nature of the country, but they have now brought into action a new weapon which is exceedingly well adapted to the changed nature of the warfare. Numbers of light guns, with a range up to seven kilometres, have been mounted on powerfully engine motor lorries. These lorries are solidly constructed, and are fitted with exceptionally large springs, arranged so as to keep the gun steady while being fired and to break the force of the recoil after the discharge. The obvious advantage about this arrangement is that the guns can be moved speedily along roads which would be impassable to guns of heavier calibre. Many of these guns were supposed to be at work around Ypres yesterday. Positions held by the French and British were fiercely attacked, but the allies managed in the main to hold their ground, and the Germans gained nothing to repay them for the ruthless sacrifice of many lives.

GERMAN WAR FACTORY IN DANGER

Canadian Press Despatch London, Dec. 3.—A foreign aircraft yesterday dropped bombs on the Krupp factory at Essen, Germany, the great plant at which are manufactured the famous German siege guns, as well as smaller arms and ammunition, according to a despatch received to-day by the Exchange Telegraph Company from The Hague. This message quotes a despatch from Berlin to the effect that the bombs were dropped on the buildings devoted to the manufacture of cannon. It is said that the airman escaped uninjured, and that the extent of the damage has not been ascertained. If this report proves true it is for Germany the ominous answer to the daring and deadly German submarine. Not so much by the damage that may have resulted, but, as in the case of the submarine, in the awful possibilities it opens up is this attack significant. The Essen works should prove vulnerable to air attacks Germany could be paralysed in the very source of her war equipment.

ON THE RUSSIAN FRONT

Berlin, via London, Dec. 3.—Major Morhart, the military writer, in discussing the eastern situation in The Tagblatt, says: "The operations around Lodz seemed to foreshadow the surrounding and annihilation of the Russian main body, but the Germans themselves were surrounded by strong Russian reinforcements from the east and south. The Germans, however, liberated themselves with heroic energy from this envelopment and resumed their attacks with indomitable persistence. The gigantic offensive movement of the Russians from Soldau to Cracow has already failed. "The plan of campaign, originally made in Paris in the interest of France and England, was that Russia should show her real strength to Germany in order to relieve the pressure on the western front. The intention was to make an irresistible offensive and compel the withdrawal of such large forces from France as to make possible Anglo-French success."

"Russia, however, threw her chief forces against Austria, believing that she would be able to effectually crush that country in a short time, but after a four months struggle this has not been accomplished because the Austrians and Hungarians are fighting as in the time of Field Marshal Radetzky, showing a very recuperative force. "Russia has already been compelled to change her whole plan of campaign, which often enough decides final victory in favor of the opponent. What has already occurred means an enormous weakening of Russia's military power. Germany and Austria have captured about 400,000 unwounded prisoners at least an equal number must have been killed or wounded and the losses through sickness must reach 300,000. This means one-third of Russia's best troops."

"The newer formations are lacking in the military qualities necessary to change Russia's destiny and the failure of the plan of operations therefore means the irretrievable impairment of Russia's offensive power." Unofficial reports from Petrograd as we go to press (Dec. 5) indicate a crushing German defeat. Unofficial Petrograd reports, however, have not been very reliable.

GERMAN WAR VOTE

Berlin, Dec. 2, via London, Dec. 3.—A momentous war session of the Reichstag was held to-day and was marked by the unanimity of feeling

that prevailed among the members in regard to prosecuting the war to the end. A new war credit of 5,000,000,000 marks (\$1,250,000,000) was voted with one dissenting vote, that of Herr Liebknecht, Socialist, and notable speeches were made by the imperial chancellor, Dr. Von Bethmann-Hollweg, and Johannes Kaempf, the Speaker. After the credit was voted the Reichstag adjourned until March 2.

WAR SUMMARY, DEC. 5

"We have come to stay," said the silent Joffre to the Alsaitians a week ago. He is making his words good. The French advance in Alsace over a wide front is the big feature of the western campaign. The Germans are seriously alarmed, and are beginning to prepare Strasbourg for defence. While the eyes of the world were on the trenches along the Yser, Joffre seems to have been preparing to make the Alsaitians "Frenchmen forever."

The allies are reported to have made up their mind that the moving of German troops from Poland to Belgium, and from Belgium to Poland, as may be found to suit the Kaiser's strategists, must cease. That particular form of battledore and shuttlecock seems to have been the chief cause of the renewal of the German offensive in Poland a week ago, after the Russians had almost won a great victory. By the use of the fine strategic railways constructed all along her eastern and western frontiers, Germany can pick up an army corps from the Yser or the Lorraine frontier and in a little over twenty-four hours land the troops near the battlefield at Lodz. This method of making one army look like two has fallen into disfavor, and the allies have decided that their campaigns in the East and West shall be so planned that the Germans will be kept busy at the same time on both fronts.

This "all together" move involves a departure from the defensive policy pursued on the western front during the past month. It means that when the Grand Duke Nicholas advances in Poland, Galicia and East Prussia, Joffre will simultaneously "start something" in Alsace, Lorraine or Belgium. The assumption behind this change of method is that the German Generals are really short of trained troops, and are no longer able to exercise an effective defensive on all the positions open to attack by the Allies.

If this assumption is correct the war has definitely entered upon its second stage, that in which the initiative is no longer within Germany's control, but has passed to the stronger forces of the enemy. There have been signs in Alsace and Lorraine of late that the "watchful waiting" period is past. In Galicia and East Prussia the Russians are steadily attacking. In Poland and Belgium only have the Germans lately been the aggressors. Now in Poland and Belgium also the Allies will go forward simultaneously as if at a single word of command. It will be interesting to watch the result of an endeavor to synchronize the movements of at least seven million men of five nationalities—French, British, Russians, Belgians and Serbs.

In the battle of Lodz the balance once again inclines to the Russians. The losses sustained by the German army in cutting its way out of the enveloping Russian forces are reported to have been terrific. One of the correspondents at Petrograd says that of the men of General Mackensen's army who were cut off not less than two-thirds were killed, wounded or taken prisoners during the battle in which they won their way out of the Russian trap. There is general agreement that the fields of Lovicz and Lodz have been the most sanguinary of modern warfare. No detailed information as to the losses is yet available, however. Thousands of undiscovered or unburied dead still lie within the dark recesses of the Polish pine forests.

TOUCHING MANIFESTATION OF FAITH

From an exchange we learn the following touching story of Catholic devotion, as recorded in the Catholic Register of Denver, Col. "Recently, in a little northern Colorado mission church, it was Communion day for the children of the parish. Two little girls drove twenty-seven miles to receive their Saviour in the Sacrament of the Altar. The Mass, due to the fact that the priest celebrated the August Sacrifice at a place some distance off before he went to this town, did not begin until 12:30. These girls and their parents had to arise at 3 o'clock in the morning and start their long drive in order that the youngsters could receive Communion. The girls therefore, had been fasting thirteen hours all but a few minutes before they received the Eucharist, and they had been awake ten hours of those thirteen."

This points a moral for many Catholics who find it inconvenient, if not possible, to fast an hour or so longer than usual in the morning in order that they may receive Holy Communion. The narration of this example of Christian fortitude and self denial is productive of introspection of a profitable character. Instances of this

kind are happening more rarely as facilities for church attendance increase, but the early days of Catholic settlement in every part of the country saw manifestations of faith that puts to shame present day hardships.

A GREAT CATHOLIC SOCIETY LAUNCHED

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC ALUMNAE ASSOCIATIONS HAS ENDORSEMENT

Toronto World New York, Nov. 29.—Surpassing all expectations was the success of the organization convention of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae Associations, which has just closed in New York. The federation has the endorsement of the 3 cardinals, 6 archbishops and 23 bishops. Even with this eminent support and backing, the response was greater than had entered into the calculations of anyone concerned. From Maine to California, as well as from Montreal, Toronto and dozens of other Canadian centres, there were representatives. The opening reception, held in the blue room of the McAlpine Hotel, was a brilliant scene. Beautifully gowned women, occasional men in evening dress, and ecclesiastics among whom the episcopal purple was not lacking, were all present. On Saturday, November 28, Mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's Cathedral by His Eminence Cardinal Farley, the brilliant scarlet robes of the prelate being a vivid touch of color against the chaste whiteness of the altar and classic purity of the walls and pillars. Lesser dignitaries, monsignors and assistants, were in the sanctuary.

BUSINESS MEETING The business meeting opened in the blue room of the McAlpine at 11 o'clock. Rev. John L. Belford of Brooklyn presided. Addresses were given by His Lordship Bishop McFaul of Trenton, N. J., on the benefits of federation; by Mrs. Mary Wade Traibacher, hon. president of the Alumnae Association of St. Joseph's College, Boston; and by Mrs. James J. Sheeran and Miss Clara L. Cogan, A. M. both of New York. Miss Cogan was later elected president. Luncheon was served in the winter garden of the hotel. About 400 participated. In the election of officers and executive, Toronto got cordial recognition. Mrs. H. T. Tully of Toronto being appointed first vice president of the confederation, and Mrs. Ambrose Small of St. Joseph's College, being appointed governor of the board of governors for Canada. A grand concert concluded the gathering on Sunday afternoon, when some of the best talent of New York and the alumnae association took part. The farewell address was given by one of the noted speakers of New York, Rev. John Burke, C. S. P., brother of Rev. Thomas F. Burke, C. S. P., rector of Newman Hall, Toronto.

TRIBUTE TO CANADA In his address Father Burke paid tribute to Canada and to its Catholicity with its grand traditions and great promise of the future. One of the things most enjoyed by the delegates in New York was the beautifully harmonized singing of the sanctuary choir in the church of the Paulists. The next meeting of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae will take place in Chicago.

RACE-PREJUDICE

HAS NOTHING IN COMMON WITH CHRISTIAN TEACHING We are all most deeply stirred by this war which is destroying thousands of men and devastating some of the fairest countries on the globe. We are stirred, not so much by wonder why it arose—that question has practical question how we shall win, and win in the most humane way. The war and its horrors have aroused within thinking men. We are all asking ourselves whether war is a necessary accompaniment, an inevitable consequence, of civilized and progressive human society. Can the quarrels which spring up among men and between nations be settled by no better means in future than the dread appeal to the ways of force? Is mankind forever doomed to cycles of preparation for slaughter, broken by a cyclone of battle and death? Can nothing be done to start an era of peace? Many men see that the present political parties are bankrupt, that the present diplomatic methods have failed, that the system of relations, ententes, treaties is weak and powerless to restrain governments determined on aggression. Some go further and ask that we should begin at last to understand that principles, Christian principles, have got lost in national interests, that the welfare of the clan has been exalted above the welfare of the race. Would it be possible to lead men, after two thousand years of Christianity, to accept the truth that we are all the children of the one common Adam, all sons of the Father of all men? God made us. We are His family, however much we differ in speech or hue or build or form. A Hottebot is as much a child of God as a Frenchman. The Chinese are as truly His children as the English. There is no racial origin for the red Indian other than that for

the white American. To a Christian all men are of one stock. So, using the word in its strict etymological sense, we are all brothers, born from the one father, born by the one mother. Tracing back our pedigree, we come from the same primeval parentage. That fact is supreme. Nothing can get behind it, weaken it, explain it away. Titles and dignities, distinctions of time, place, class, race, are the merest fortresses when set over against the great, compelling fact that all men are brothers, one to another, because all men are children of the same parents, sons of the One Father. In view of that sublime relationship, is not race prejudice empty, foolish, and narrow-minded? There is an article—one of many that deserve reading—in the current British Review which makes a very opportune allusion to the unreason of discriminating against a nation on account of its race origin. The article deals with Japan and her attitude during this war. With its title I am little concerned. Indeed, I fancy that the Japanese will prove to be guided by no larger force of altruism than the rest of the combatants. But I was exceedingly struck by the concluding paragraph in which the writer, Mr. E. Bruce Mitford, F. R. G. S., expresses an opinion which is of great value at this moment. He says: "Finally, it seems to me, Japan, by her magnanimity and self-restraint, has dealt a heavy blow—let us hope, a mortal blow—at that grim spectre of the future world, race prejudice. On the score of that ill passion, men still picture the horrors of a titanic conflict between East and West. 'The two,' they say, 'can never meet; they are as the poles apart. Let us therefore, resist every effort to bring them together. Nay, more; let us of the West keep the East forever under our feet. So shall we secure ourselves (for we are outnumbered) our precious standard of living, our still more precious trade.' That," Mr. Mitford continues, "is the policy of selfishness, of unworthy pride, of moral death. Was the world, indeed, made for the West alone? Or for all nations, creeds and tongues? Is not the principle for which Armageddon is now being fought, that of live and let live? And, that grand principle being established, and sealed and hallowed by much blood, is it not to apply to the East as against the West? No, if right is to prevail, in this great struggle against might—as it will prevail—it must prevail, not in Europe alone, but the world over. For ever and a day it must govern not only the relations of the nations but of the hemispheres. "The world of to-morrow, ransomed from the slavery of racial hate, must be one in which "there is neither East nor West, Border nor birth" to mar the universal harmony."

That is a noble sentiment. It is also a Christian principle. No man who is truly a Christian, no man who believes the New Testament to be the Word of God, can consistently give place in his soul to a doubt that mankind is one. Race hatred is anti-Christian. Race prejudice? There we feel driven up against a wall we can neither mine nor mount. The difficulty to be overcome is not physical; many of the peoples we despise are as fine specimens of humanity as, maybe finer, than we are. Did not an American statesman, looking for the first time on the statue of Apollo, start back with the exclamation "My God! A Mohawk Indian?" The physical side of man is not the cause of race prejudice. It would be mere whimsey to ask whether the mental side was. It is rather the facial. The receding forehead, the flattened nostrils, the thickened lips, the curving, almond eyes—at these the Caucasian starts and is repelled. I am free to confess that my predilections start from the Caucasus, and are frozen firm in the hot swamps of West Africa. It is not merely color that offends. Great saints, most holy personages, have had darkly pigmented skins. Race prejudice springs from the facial difference which divides East from West, Africa from Europe, the southern states of America from the north. But—we have to face facts—does that prejudice work a complete abstinence from inter-relations? It does not. The footsteps of the white man can be traced in the tepee of the Comanches, in the cabin of the negro. In a few generations, type has assimilated and frequently in forms of beauty and manliness that are impeccable down to the finger-tips. How if communications continue, increase, obtain recognition? There would be, not a new race, but a race with new characteristics.

A. d., I think, there is much evidence already to hand from more than one part of the world, that conquest and colonization, trade and commerce are gradually slowly but surely, casting down the barriers of race distinctions. The continent of America furnishes more than one instance of this, sometimes on a large scale. The Spanish colonist fused with the native. In Brazil to-day a heterogeneous population is fast becoming a homogeneous people. North America must some time or other yield its strain to commingling with the black and the yellow races, ever pressing upon it with prolific force. That such a vast change as the extravaganza of a particular type will be consummated easily or quickly, no one dreams. But the traces of old Rome in France and Spain and Britain, of old Spain in Ireland, of an ancient empire that spread and led and lasted among an alien population,

struck deep at first and can never be erased. We can see the action of physical relationships on every page of history. That action in our own day is less clear. But it is none the less going on. May it be—who shall say it may not be?—that the decay of race prejudice, brought about in God's own time through man's way, is not destined to play a great part in the propagation and progress of the gospel? Christianity is wider in scope, vaster in aim, than the limits of the Roman empire, which was its foyer and than the limits of the migrations or the people whom that empire influenced. The kingdom of Christ is to cover the whole earth, is to come to all mankind, whatever the speech, color, and form be of men to whom its message of faith and hope arrive. Race prejudice and Christianity have nothing in common. Race-hate and Christianity have everything in opposition. Christ our Lord and Master is the elder brother of all mankind. Could we Christians only believe and profess and practice that principle of our Divine Teacher, should we not be going far on in the way of bringing forth the dawn of that blessed era of peace when the sons of God might lay aside forever the harness of war and sing the hymns of our Father's praise in the grand congregation of all mankind, brethren and friends?—Liverpool Times.

"CHRISTIAN SCIENCE"

The most remarkable thing about "Christian Science" is that it is not Christian and it is not science. It is not Christian. It denies the Divinity of Christ and the Personality of God. It affirms Pantheism and Manichaeism. It is not science. It bristles with contradictions and absurdities. It denies the reality of material things. It abandons the scientific method of observation of nature. It bids us all go to school to a deluded woman. It tells us she learned her new doctrines from "inspiration" and "from the Bible." We must use her "key" to the Bible and accept her absurd misinterpretation of the Word of God. Christian Scientists will not use the word "miracle" but profess to have from the prophecies the secret of marvelous cures independently of the resources of medical science. Thus, like all denials of Christianity, Christian Science works itself out to a most pitiful and superstitious delusion. The man who is fond of pie late at night wants to escape the dire results of that habit without having to listen to the rude remarks of his medical attendants. He takes up Christian Science and is glad to find that the pie was a delusion and a dream, while the elephant that sat on his chest all night was perhaps a more substantial entity. Another man learns that his alcohol and his drugs are quite unreal when compared with the green and blue snakes and the whole moving picture show they have given him. Dyspepsia and "Christian Science" are of imagination all compact. Before the era of cheap and abundant pills and potions, imaginative and creative artists used to declaim from soap boxes about the virtues of the "Elixir of Life" and the "Precious Panacea," implacable foes to all toothache, corns, bunions, bugs, pleurisy and dyspepsia. A benign government intimated to them that their self-sacrificing labors might be dispensed with. At present the pills and potions are spiritualized, as it were; the "dope assumes the form of pompous platitudes, a weak dilution of Emersonian rhetoric, in which studied vagueness and avoidance of morning fail to hide inherent absurdities and contradictions. Unreal entities known as dollars are painfully necessary for the propagation of the new gospel. It is more than likely that the full-page report of the "Lecture on Christian Science" by Jacob S. Shield, C. S. B., which appeared in the Minneapolis Morning Tribune of November 13, was not unconnected with those unreal entities. The Tribune may be only a dream in the minds of the Eddyites; but perfectly good dollars, not fairy money, are always welcome to the Eddyites and the Tribune which gives up imaginary paper and printer's ink, and not for nothing. One has to buy the absurdities of this deluded sect in book form if one is foolish enough to think that a hard-earned dollar is as big a delusion as the pompous nonsense of Mrs. Eddy.

ANOTHER BOOK ANNOUNCED FROM PEN OF MGR. BENSON

In spite of the fact that Oddfish is only just issued to the public, novel readers have not quite seen the end of Mr. Benson's masterpieces in fiction, says the Catholic Universe, of London. "The Universe is able to announce that arrangements are in hand for the publication of yet another novel next year. Mr. Benson also left an unpublished mystery play, which Messrs. Longmans have in preparation under the title of 'The Upper Room.' The immediate cause of Mr. Benson's death, says the London Catholic Times, was congestion of the lungs following upon an attack of neuritis, which affected the nerves of the heart. He passed away in Bishop's House, Seaford, in full possession of his faculties. Mr. Benson's last instructions were to the effect that he desired a Requiem Mass should be celebrated for the repose of his soul at his chapel at Hare street house, Buntingford, and that the interment of his remains should take place, if possible, within the private grounds. Mr. Benson was an amateur weaver in tapestry. In his bedroom at Buntingford is a series of panels worked by himself, depicting "Death's Progress." The final scene, hanging over the bed, is entitled "Death Meeting Robert Hugh Benson."

Responsibility walks hand in hand with capacity and power.

FATHER FRASER'S CHINESE MISSION

Taichowfu, China, June 7, 1914. Dear Mr. Coffey.—When I came here two years ago I only had five catechists, now I have twenty-one. I owe this rapid progress principally to my dear friends of the CATHOLIC RECORD. God bless them and your worthy paper! It takes about \$50 a year to support a catechist and for every such sum I receive will place a man in a new district to open it up to the Faith. During the past few months I have opened up quite a number of new places and the neophytes are very pious and eager for baptism. You will appreciate the value of my catechists when I tell that I baptized eighty-five adults since the beginning of the year as a result of their work. I have even brighter hopes for the future if only my friends abroad will continue to back me up financially. J. M. FRASER. Previously acknowledged... \$4,575 43 Friend, Montreal..... 1 00 Edw. B. Foy, Toronto..... 2 00

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