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THE
LIGHT OF REASON

EDITED BY

JAMES ALLEN.

"It is the law of Nature that a bad seed cannot bring forth good fruit. Seeds (that is, our thoughts, words, feelings, actions, wishes) that are good, produce good results for us; seeds that are evil, bring poisonous, bitter fruit."

HOPE LA GALLIENNE.

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THE LIGHT OF REASON

DEVOTED TO

THE EXPOUNDING OF THE LAWS OF
BEING AND THE HIGHER LIFE

EDITED BY

JAMES ALLEN

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

BY

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THE LIGHT OF REASON

VOL. V. APRIL 1st, 1904. No. 4.

EDITORIAL.

Go into the fields and country lanes at this time of the year, and you will see gardeners and farmers busy sowing seeds in the newly-prepared soil. If you were to ask any one of those gardeners or farmers what kind of produce he expected from the seed he was sowing, he would doubtless regard you as foolish, and would tell you that he does not "expect" at all, that it is a matter of common knowledge that his produce will be of the kind which he is sowing, and that he is sowing wheat, or barley, or turnips as the case may be, in order to re-produce that particular kind.

* * *

Every fact and process in Nature contains

a moral lesson for the wise man. There is no law in the world of Nature around us which is not to be found operating with the same mathematical certainty in the mind of man and in human life. All the parables of Jesus are illustrative of this truth, and are drawn from the simple facts of Nature. There is a process of seed-sowing in the mind and life, a spiritual sowing which leads to a harvest according to the kind of seed sown. Thoughts, words, and acts are seeds sown, and, by the inviolable law of things, they produce after their kind.

* * *

The man who thinks hateful thoughts brings hatred upon himself. The man who thinks loving thoughts is loved. The man whose thoughts, words, and acts are sincere is surrounded by sincere friends ; the insincere man is surrounded by insincere friends. The man who sows wrong thoughts and deeds, and prays that God will bless him, is in the position of a farmer who, having sown tares, asks God to bring forth for him a harvest of wheat.

“ That which ye sow, ye reap : see yonder fields—
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn
Was corn ; the silence and the darkness knew ;
So is a man’s fate born.

“ He cometh reaper of the things he sowed.”

He who would be blest, let him scatter blessings. He who would be happy, let him consider the happiness of others.

* * *

Then there is another side to this seed

sowing. The farmer must scatter all his seed upon the land, and then leave it to the elements. Were he to covetously hoard his seed, he would lose both it and his produce, for his seed would perish. It perishes when he sows it, but in perishing it brings forth a greater abundance. So in life, we get by giving ; we grow rich by scattering. The man who says he is in possession of knowledge which he cannot give out because the world is incapable of receiving it, either does not possess such knowledge, or, if he does, will soon be deprived of it ; if he is not already so deprived. To hoard is to lose ; to exclusively retain is to be dispossessed.

* * *

Even the man who would increase his material wealth, must be willing to part with (invest) what little capital he has, and then wait for the increase. So long as he retains his hold on his precious money, he will not only remain poor, but will be growing poorer every day. He will, after all, lose the thing he loves, and will lose it without increase. But if he wisely lets it go ; if, like the farmer, he scatters his few seeds of gold, then he can faithfully wait for and reasonably expect the increase.

* * *

Men are asking God to give them peace and purity, and righteousness and blessedness, but are not obtaining these things ; and why not ? Because they are not practising them, not sowing them. I once heard a preacher pray very earnestly for forgiveness,

and shortly afterwards, in the course of his sermon, he called upon his congregation to "show no mercy to the enemies of the Church." Such self-delusion is pitiful, and men have yet to learn that the way to obtain forgiveness is to give it; the way to obtain peace and blessedness is to scatter peaceful and blessed thoughts, words, and deeds.

* * *

Men believe that they can sow the seeds of strife, impurity, and unbrotherliness, and then gather in a rich harvest of peace, purity, and concord by merely asking for it. What more pathetic sight than to see an irritable and quarrelsome man praying for peace? Men reap that which they sow, and any man can reap all blessedness now and at once, if he will put aside selfishness, and sow broadcast the seeds of kindness, gentleness, and love.

* * *

If a man is troubled, perplexed, sorrowful, or unhappy, let him ask—"What mental seeds have I been sowing? What seeds *am* I sowing? What have I done for others? What is my attitude towards others? What seeds of trouble and sorrow and unhappiness have I sown that I should thus reap these bitter weeds?" Let him seek within and find, and having found, let him abandon all the seeds of self, and sow, henceforth, only the seeds of Truth. Let him learn of the farmer the simple truths of wisdom.

HOW WE PUNISH OURSELVES.

BY HOPE LA GALLIENNE.

WHY does pain exist? What does it mean? What are we to learn from it? What place can it have in the scheme of a universe created and governed by One Whose nature is compassionate and Whose name is Love? So humanity has fretted and questioned since the beginnings of time, and so it may do until its cries are quenched under the pall of everlasting silence. Yet, if our hearts would but accept and believe what our glib lips affirm; if we were to reason together and work things out to a rational conclusion, all questioning and discontent, all murmurings at what we call the "Divine Will" and the "Hand of God," would cease. To those who are honest in their implied faith and sincere in their desire for a better life, the *reason* of suffering, its prevention and cure can be shown, and it can be proved that in spite of all the pain and sorrow in this body, love and compassion are attributes of God, and that the more we suffer, the more He pities.

We bring our sufferings upon ourselves through not keeping God's law. Christ

taught that a man reaps what he sows. We read His words and try to invest them with all sorts of mystic import—anything to shuffle out of accepting their plain, bald, straight, simple meaning.

Put into modern words—of which we should not be afraid since we profess to make use of Christ's teaching in modern life—the idea would be presented thus:—“A man makes his own destiny and is master of his fate, for whatever he thinks or does, comes back again to him.” Each deed and each secret thought puts in motion the machinery that in fulness of time shall return them to him in unrecognisable completeness. The machinery never gets out of order; it is the same mechanism that brings round each season in its turn, that curbs the ocean tides, that controls the moon's appearing; that makes the rain to fall, the sun to shine, the flowers to bloom and die. What is this power? What places the planets, and what paints the rose; what lights the myriad stars, and what bestows its perfume upon the violet?

What *is* the force that looks after all these things? It is the law of Nature, the simple law that we, poor fools, are not simple enough to understand; a law immutable, unchangeable, unerring, just, correct. It is the law of Nature that a bad seed cannot bring forth good fruit. Seeds (that is, our thoughts, words, feelings, actions, wishes) that are good produce good results for us; seeds that are evil bring poisonous, bitter

fruit, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold.

The pain we bear now is the result of our having sown bad seed, of having by a thought, wish, or deed in past days put into motion that accurate, unfailing mechanism—the law of Nature. When sorrow comes it is nothing but what we have laid up for ourselves. Our thoughts and actions come home to roost, and

THIS LAW NEVER CHANGES.

Think, then, how God compassionates us when we suffer, knowing as He does that we might have prevented it, but would not. Then let us work out our own salvation, and lay up for ourselves, not suffering, but joy; not pain, trouble, or fear, but health, happiness, and high courage by thinking rightly, by living unselfishly and at peace with all; by working faithfully, and by not resisting evil, but by overcoming evil with good; by taking as our everyday example the Christ who went about doing good, whose life and death spelt the one word “self-sacrifice.” Thus, and thus *only*, shall we free ourselves from pain.

THE TEACHINGS OF A SEER.

HEAR ye these words! For, tho' they may
appear
As measured rhyming to the heedless ear;
They try to voice the teachings of a Seer,
Who, seeing, knew.

First: Mark ye this! The body that ye
hold
Is but a little thing, soon growing cold;
Freeing the Life it did a time enfold.
"Dust unto dust."

The Life in ye remaineth still the same,
It is but freed, a wondrous living flame;
And goeth back, rejoicing, whence it came,
To peace and rest.

Again: Heed ye these words! That which
ye sow
Ye reap. That is the truth. That ye must
know.
Then plant ye as ye will, for joy or woe,
Ye garner it.

What ye have now, and as ye fare from birth,
With grief or want, or be it wealth and mirth,
'Tis fruitage of your sowing on this Earth
Seeds good or ill.

And know! That which we think, that then
are we;
Your thoughts are working ever, building ye
A house of evil or of purity—
Ye have the choice.

So guard your thoughts, and never from ye
send
Curses of ill; for certain in the end
They will return and build for thee, my
friend,
A house of pain.

And last of love, that all-consuming fire,
Cleanse it of passion and of base desire,
Or it shall chain thee to the heavy mire
Of Earthly life.

But, if ye purify this lower love,
Making it perfect, harmless as a dove,
'Tis then ye know a rapture far above
The fleeting kiss.

Then will it live and last through time and
space,
And know not sorrow for the lost embrace,
It goes beyond the grave, and there will
trace
The loved one Home.

Thus am I taught; and so would I teach ye:
That what ye prize as life must shadow be,
Which does but hide the true Reality;
Yet "It" is here.

For what ye know as Love, and what ye feel
As Good, and Truth, and Virtue, that is
Real,
Echoing dimly through, from God's Ideal,
Eternally.

MERCURY.

KNOWLEDGE is certainly one of the means
of pleasure; ignorance is mere privation.
We always rejoice when we learn, and
grieve when we forget. We grow more
happy as our minds take a wider range.—
RASSELAS.

THE POWER OF FAITH.

BY J. S. F. MILLER.

"Faith can move mountains ; so the Scripture saith.
The very gates of Heaven are built on Faith.
He would not see high Heaven, though Heaven were
near,
Who had not Faith : and with it, Heaven is here."

THE mind evolves its own. Seek the True and you will find it ; or the False, it lies beneath your touch. Have faith and ye can do all things.

Faith, day by day, is transforming the weak into the strong, the helpless into the helpful, the false into the true, the limited into the limitless. In times of old it worked miracles. It works them now.

There is no greater power than this Faith, which inspired those, who, under her spell, wrote words which will live to spiritualise and to regenerate the hearts and minds of men, until the world rolls, a cold, black, feeble mass in space.

No limit exists to time, or space, or thought ; neither is there a limit to the works of Faith. For Faith, in very truth, can move mountains, and gain us entry into the fair country beyond.

We are not the chance creatures of an hour, the "magic shadow shapes that come and go ;" we are a something higher than we yet know, and if we are true to the royal part of our natures we will mount, moment by moment, towards the rosy tipped peak to which the finger of God points.

"But time escapes,
Live now or never."

Make of your foes, a footstool ; of enemies, poverty, ill-health, calamity, moonbeams to light you on your way. Neither scorn nor defeat shall hinder, for Faith has the eagle eye, which, piercing the gloom of the future, lights upon the glories to be, seeing not the obstacles attendant ; to such she is blind. She sees only the loved thing beyond, and pulverises all things that might hinder her progress.

The nobler aspect of psychic and spiritual life is gradually but firmly creeping to the foreground. Christ, the fore-runner, pointed to the divinity of man, and taught that, by evolution following evolution, man came to be illimitable and divine. Microscopic man is the germ of almighty man.

Let us make our own lives and not be the sports of chance. The mariner guides his ship with courage, skill, and enduring trust, through the black billows, dense mists, and roaring tempests, safely into the harbour at last.

We, too, have power to plan out our own course through life, and to pursue it, mould-

ing circumstances and environment to our will.

"Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Skill achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

We, by meditation and action, may become all which we aspire to be, and render ourselves invulnerable, like Achilles of old.

The physicians granted to us in our weak and helpless moments are many, and of these the most powerful come from the natural world.

Overhead, a dense, solid mass of intense blue, with a clinging flakelet of pink, filmy cloud—the lacy covering of a sky-maid; a thread of liquid silver, leaping softly down the hillside, singing as it goes; the leaves of the silver birch trees turning their pale faces to the caressing breeze; the waves mounting and curling about each other in their eagerness and fulness of life; the great mountains towering aloft into the heaven—are not these the teachers (*i.e.* the *healers*) of the human race. For, at times, the human touch is too insensitive to heal, and only probes the wound; but Nature, in her infinite sympathy, knows how to touch and to heal those who trust her.

"Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her."

In times of great mental and spiritual distress, when the whole future looks black, and the world seems a prison-house, we must wait until we get a grip of our souls, and

soon the Angel of Faith will move towards us to heal and strengthen until the sickness of soul vanishes, and once again we are strong to do, to dare, and to accomplish. Such supine moments must come to us all at times, but they must also go, to leave us as before, free and unfettered.

"Thither our path lies;
Wind we up the heights."

To the faithful none of the glories of the spiritual world shall be withheld. Lands do not charm, nor pleasures please, nor gold caress; material things pall, but the growth of the beauties of the inner soul gives to us always that true peace and happiness which the world cannot give, but can often take away for a time, though it can never dispossess us.

"It is our will
Which thus enchains us to permitted ill.
We might be otherwise; we might be all
We dream of—happy, high, majestic.
Where is the beauty, love, and truth we seek,
But in our minds? And if we were not weak,
Should we be less in deed than in desire?"

NESTLING birds are singing,
Radiant flow'rs are smiling,
Rosy buds are bursting,
Glad thoughts are trysting
God. Good is all.
Joy doth befall
All men, be they great or small.
AUGUSTA T. WEBSTER.

THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT.

BY JAMES ALLEN.

MAN does not truly act until he acts in the spirit of truth; his deeds are not pure until they are woven of the texture of truth. The acts of virtue are not virtue itself, but are its outward manifestation; they constitute the letter, of which the spirit is inward and invisible. To be a mechanical imitator of the letter of virtue—that is, to do certain things because they are called “good,” without having the spirit of goodness—is not to be virtuous, but to be dead to virtue. For instance, the kind-hearted man will give to the needy, and so the giving of one’s substance to the needy has come to be regarded as kindness itself, which is a confusing of the letter with the spirit, for the unkind man may “give,” and having given, he flatters himself for having done a good deed, but the inward spirit of kindness being absent, his act is a dead seed which bears no fruit.

The man who has the spirit of kindness, never thinks the thought, “I am kind and good because I give to the poor,” nor does he even think of letting others know of his

kindness, the spirit of love in which he dwells being all-sufficient; but the man who mistakes the letter for the spirit, having the *form* of kindness only, prides himself upon the kind act which he has done, and is anxious that others should know how kind he is.

It is the same with every kind of virtue; it is a condition of the heart expressing itself in acts, and where the spirit is, the letter will be found; but the letter may be there without the spirit, and where such is the case there is death, for the spirit alone is Life.

The man who adopts outward forms of goodness, and thereby imagines he has attained to goodness itself, is like a man who, having put a mask on his face, believes it to be verily his face.

The New Testament aspect of Formalism or Pharisaism as being the greatest of all sins or errors, and as being the most difficult to eradicate, touches and teaches a profound truth, for, in the soul of the sinner (no matter how vile may be his sin) who knows that he is a sinner, there is a bright ray of light, and his salvation has already commenced; but the sinner who is convinced that he is holy because he has merely adopted the form of holiness, is indeed lost in darkness. It is thus that “the drunkards and harlots,” namely, those who know they are sinners, and make no pretence to anything else, are nearer to the Kingdom (more ready to receive the truth, and be reformed) than

those who, being sinners, do not know they are such, but pride themselves on being more holy than others because they have adopted certain outward forms of conduct or religion.

Herein resides the truth of the doctrine of non-salvation by works, that is, by mere outward acts uninformed by the spirit of Goodness or Love, as well as the doctrine of non-salvation by faith without works; for where there are no outward acts of goodness, the spirit of Goodness is absent, and if a man thinks, "I am saved by faith, and works are unnecessary, and a stumbling-block," such a man is self-deluded, having neither faith nor works.

Wheresoever the spirit of truth is, there will also be the letter. The good tree will always bear good fruit; but the letter may be copied and imitated by those who have not yet developed the spirit, and this is the letter that kills; it is death itself.

Formalism does not consist solely in the mistaking of Church rites for the spirit of religion; this is but one aspect of Formalism. This duality of the letter and the spirit is universal, and not merely particular, and the man who lives in his bodily sensations, who fears death and dreads the loss of his body and its pleasures, is a Formalist, that is, he is living in the passing manifestation of Life, and not in Life itself; he is mistaking the shadow for the substance, the letter for the spirit. That man also is a Formalist who judges his fellow-men entirely and solely

from their outward acts, mistaking those acts for the real spirit of truth or error.

Goodness of heart is the great living power, and he who has attained to this, both truly acts and truly judges.

Every act of a man stands or falls by the spirit which prompts and informs it, and not by any human judgment or estimate of it. If it be of the spirit of truth, it is a living seed which will bring forth the fruits of Life; if it be of the spirit of self, and a mere imitation of truth, it is a lifeless seed remaining for ever barren.

Truth is the Saviour of the world. Only in the spirit of truth is there right judgment and clear vision. Confounding the letter with the spirit, men stumble into the darkness of divisions, animosities, and strifes. He who will abandon self, and will cultivate Love and Goodwill ungrudgingly and without stint, will find the spirit of truth which is salvation and Life.

SEEK THE LIGHT.

BLIND souls that love the darkness,
 And drowse in stupour dense,
 In darkness of gross evil,
 Or twilight joys of sense,
 Come, quit your caves and dungeons,
 Come out into the light,
 Tho' first its rays with blindness
 Afflict your dazzled sight.

E. H. PHYSICK.

LETTERS OF A TRUTH-SEEKER.

III.—IDEALS, AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO
THE PRACTICAL.

BY HARRY J. STONE.

WHEN we have broken through those self-erected barriers of outward creeds; when, by our own seeking within we have caught a glimpse of our true relationship to the Infinite, then does our search become of direct practical value. If our thought on the Unity of Life has in any degree amounted to actual realisation, some light of the Truth must have reached us which we shall eventually express. We will not be discouraged if these flashes of higher thought are, at first perhaps, dim and uncertain, for does not their development assure us of the ultimate submission of the mind to their influence? With this thought we shall advance until we live continually in the glow of this light from within, and the whole life is flooded with its radiance.

Having found, then, how we may become receptive of these Gems of Truth, we need to learn by what method we can best apply them to the everyday life. It is at this

point that the value of the ideal appeals to us, and we find, (contrary perhaps to our previous reasoning,) that there is a direct relationship between the ideal and the practical. Let us then make this the present object of our search, so that the Life from within may have every freedom to operate on the physical plane.

Ideals are popularly supposed to belong to the realm of dreams, and to exist only in the imagination of those especially adapted for seeing the poetic side of life. The idealist is generally held to be a person of vague shadowy ideas which he can seldom realise in the practical life. So the "dreamer," as he is often called, is perhaps overlooked by the man who is busy "doing things." However, the practical business man, though he may laugh at the idea, is still an idealist. His huge commercial enterprise is the result of an ideal, first conceived mentally, and then persistently held, and worked for until realised.

What then is the Ideal, and how can we seek to realise it in the life?

We shall find that every ideal has three planes of manifestation.

(1) *The True Ideal.* The Law; Universal Truth; Intelligence, in their relation to a particular object. We can at present only know this aspect of the ideal imperfectly, *i.e.* our knowledge of it can only be in proportion to its clearness to us on the next plane of manifestation.

(2) *The Intellectual Ideal,* or our particular

mental picture of the True Ideal. That measure of the True Ideal of which we are receptive through our own development. In some cases this mental picture will be the ideal which will bring the most personal pleasure or profit to the individual; in others that which will be the greatest benefit to the greatest number. In all cases it will represent the stage of enlightenment of that mind through which the ideal is expressed.

(3) *The Practical Ideal*, or the physical means employed to express the intellectual ideal. The mental picture materialised. The "cup of cold water" that sometimes reveals the nobility within the man.

Like the knowledge of our true relationship to life, we find that the ideal really springs from within. It then develops as a mental picture, and finally becomes practical on the physical plane. In tracing the ideal through these three stages we see that, while all practical ideals will contain some qualities of the True Ideal, they must also bear evidence of the character of the person or persons who express them. Every Church, Sect, Institution, Society; every work of art, in whatever form it may be expressed, reveals something of the True Ideal, and also the particular stage of enlightenment of the mind or minds who conceived it. Everything depends upon the character, or medium, through which the ideal must pass. Only a perfect mind could express a perfect ideal, and until we have attained this perfect mind it is evident that the practical ideals of our

life must fall short of the True Ideal. For instance, we may built up a mental picture of an ideal state of society based on the general recognition of Universal Brotherhood, but when the time comes to do a kindness for the man who has been doing his best to ruin our business, or for the woman who has been trying to hang a scandal to our name, we find that it takes more than a vague perception to make any ideal practical. What we need now, what is of the very greatest importance to us at this stage in our search, is to know how to adjust the life so that we may best express our conception of the True Ideal. It is evident that only in this way can our knowledge become of real practical value in the daily life.

Here again no hard and fast rules may be laid down by one seeker for another. Each must be guided by the result of his own search within. However, in the attempt to adjust the life to harmonise with our ideals, much help may be gained by a study of ideals in operation. Horatio Dresser gives us a remarkable instance of this. Speaking of the Village of Oberammergau, he says: "One all-controlling idea pervades the place, alike absorbing every man, woman, and child that lives there. Here, once in ten years' representatives of all civilisation come to witness the world-renowned Passion Play. For hundreds of years this play has been given ten summers in a century by these simple peasants, and their entire lives are devoted to preparation for it. To take the

part of the Christ is the summit of their ambition. In order to represent a certain character they practise the most careful self-denial. They try to mould their lives in accordance with the qualities of that character, and they dwell on it, and rehearse it year in and year out. And this is why they are so remarkable. They are shaped by an ideal. They have one object in view, and in their peasant simplicity and catholic faith they are willing to exclude every other. When they appear in the play they make no affectation. They simply represent in actual life what they have so long dwelt upon as an ideal. There in actual practice, and in striking simplicity, is the ideal of all character-building, of all co-operation with evolution, of all adjustment to life—namely, to have an object in view which we never lose sight of, and which we gradually realise, day by day and year by year."

Many thousands of instances similar to the above could be mentioned which would reveal the same principle of the ideal in operation. If we analyse any practical ideal realised in our own experience, we shall find the process in all cases the same. It was at first a mental picture of some object which, at the time, and for some reason, appealed to us as *good*. Then after long fostering in the thought and careful attention, it was finally expressed in some form in the physical life. Ideals are like seeds, they not only need sowing, but nourishment and constant attention.

If in our search within we have revealed some object worthy of attainment, then let us concentrate and direct the very highest thought we know into that one channel, and have no fear of results. Think nothing too simple, for it is the simple ideals which count for most in true service. Whatever our object, if we but live it into the regular daily thought, we must eventually express it in the actual deed. Fear nothing, for if we live to our noblest and best, the very forces of evolution shall aid us.

LIFE.

O LIFE, how vast thou art!
 How little understood!
 The force that fills the universe!
 The universal good!

The truth in everything!
 The love that knows no fear!
 The very faculties by which
 We feel, and see, and hear!

The light that never fails
 Wherever we may range!
 The great foundation of us all
 Which nothing here can change!

E'en death itself is but
 The changing form of thee—
 When shall thy Truth be known by man?
 His ways with thine agree?

F. HORSLEY.

OUR COMMON GOAL.

BY EDITH M. BAKER.

IN a short but very striking tale, Count Tolstoy has pictured the end of ill-directed human ambition. It is the story of a man who has been granted as much land as he can walk round between sunrise and sunset.

His ever-increasing desires, his frantic efforts are briefly yet powerfully sketched. As the sun declines, he struggles on with feverish breathless haste towards the goal, but only reaches it to fall down dead. The conclusion strikes home in its relentless brevity—

“Pakhom's man took the hoe, dug a grave for him, made it just long enough, from head to foot—three arshins—and buried him.”

Few could read the story thus pitilessly summed up without receiving a momentary shock. The grave, three arshins long, thus pictured by a master hand, seems yawning at our feet, and human nature naturally shrinks.

Yet it is from no mere trench, however deep, that those whose steps are guided by the light of reason, should recoil, but only from the grave that might cut across our

pathway before our day's work should be fully done.

But since our faces are all turned towards a common goal, it would be consoling to know that we regard it in such a spirit as to be no more disturbed by its occasional remembrance than a traveller is troubled when he thinks of the end of his journey.

There is one grave, and one grave only, from which a man who is no coward has cause to shrink, and that is the grave which he digs for himself; but alas, how many a man by wild disregard, even by mad defiance of Nature's laws, is digging for himself to-day a grave “just long enough.”

But this, a painful and prolific subject, is entirely beyond the scope of the present article, since this premature and self-prepared grave is not our common goal, but rather a pitfall which we must carefully, even scientifically avoid.

As a rule, there is no cause so sacred, no, not even the Social Good, as to require of a man that he shall cast his health, his strength, and all his future hopes of doing good into a gulf that shall swallow them up without compunction, leaving only the single word “Finis,” that most misleading of all inscriptions, to mark the spot whence we had hoped to hear the cry “Excelsior!”

Those who are rightly occupied with their life's work will have neither time nor inclination to think of its end. What man in the freshness and vigour of the early morning thinks of the bed where he will lie at night,

but when the shadows lengthen and the darkness comes he will go gladly to his rest.

Skull and crossbones belong to a day that is dead, and we consign them gladly to the dusty lumber room of the past. Let the Trappist delve a grave if he will. Men of the present have to hew a path up the steep mountain side, steps by which generations coming after shall climb to a wider vision and a purer air.

Ever upwards, ever working till our powers begin to fail, though in our minds there lingers still the sunset glow of happy memories, of glad and helpful days, and on our lips the aspiration—

“One labour more, and I will welcome death
In struggle and in joy.”

In the old days men said, “We have sinned, but we will repent, yea, even in sackcloth and ashes, and a merciful God will forgive.” But Nature knows neither favour nor revenge: her watchwords are Cause and Effect. Standing calm and passionless at her high tribunal, she enunciates her unsparing sentence: What a man sows, he shall reap, and every debt he shall pay even to the uttermost farthing.

Therefore, if a man desire fulness of days and a happy life, he can scarcely do better than impress upon his mind some personal paraphrase of these words of a great poet—

“I see life is not short, but immeasurably long;
I henceforth tread the world chaste, temperate, an early
riser, a steady grower;

Every hour the sermon of centuries, and still of centuries.

I must follow up these continual lessons of the air,
water, earth;

I perceive I have no time to lose.”

The concluding line especially might well be laid to heart by every practical idealist.

It belongs entirely to the modern idea of death that it is now possible to write of it and say little or nothing of the Beyond. Our daily lives are now very slightly influenced by thoughts of futurity.

“We were all taught,” writes Emerson, “that we were born to die, and, over that, all the terrors that theology could gather from savage nations were added to increase the gloom.” But to a younger, happier generation these terrors are comparatively unknown. Our incentive to virtuous actions is no longer the fear of dying but the joy of living, a joy which is none the less actual and tangible because fools who have bartered it for a mess of pottage question its reality.

Lastly, as regards that vast debatable land whose shores are washed by “the measureless waters of human tears,” let us carefully refrain from every dogmatic opinion, let us shrink from words that might trouble that faith which seeks to span the gulf, reaching out toward the loved and lost who have passed into the Land of Shadows.

Moreover there are times when even the most cheerful and busy of mankind are subject to depression, and the heart at such moments may well ache with uncertainty.

Should this ever be the case, we can scarcely face the unanswerable questions with thoughts more clear and all-sufficing than those to which Tolstoy gives utterance when he says—

“One thing alone is certain and indubitable, that which Christ said when He was dying, ‘Into Thy hands I commend My spirit,’ that is to say, at death I return whence I came. And if I believe *that* from which I emanated to be Reason and Love (and these two realities I know), then I shall joyously return to Him, knowing that it will be well with me. Not only have I no regret, but I rejoice at the thought of the passage which awaits me.”

With such words engraven in our hearts we may travel cheerily through life, outwardly oblivious of the end, until the parting beams of a declining day rest tenderly upon our Common Goal.

WHY take refuge in the thought of another sphere, whilst there yet remains so much of the present lying unexplored before thee?

R. DIMSDALE STOCKER.

OPPORTUNITIES flit by while we sit regretting the chances we have lost, and the happiness that comes to us we heed not because of the happiness that is gone.—J. K. JEROME.

THEY are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

ONE LIFE, ONE LAW.

WHAT do we know—what need we know
Of the great world to which we go?
We peer into the tomb, and hark:
Its walls are dim, its doors are dark.

Be still, O mourning heart, nor seek
To make the tongueless silence speak,
Be still, be strong, nor wish to find
Their way who leave the world behind—
Voices and forms forever gone
Into the darkness of the dawn.

What is their wisdom, clear and deep?—
That as men sow they surely reap—
That every thought, that every deed,
Is sown into the soul for seed,
They have no word we do not know—
Nor yet the cherubim aglow
With God: we know that virtue saves—
They know no more beyond the graves.

EDWIN MARKHAM.

WHAT is remote and difficult of success we are apt to overrate; what is really best for us lies always within our reach, though often overlooked.—LONGFELLOW.

THE wise have no doubts,
The virtuous no sorrows,
The brave no fears.

CONFUCIUS.

THE GOSPEL OF LOVE.

BY EMILY WRIGHT HOOD.

LIFE may be likened to a sheet of white paper, on which we are to make a record of thought, word, and deed. Shall we make a good, clear record that will bear inspection, or a blotched and soiled record, full of stain and uncleanness? It matters not what our past has been, we must suffer for the evil of it; we must reap remorse if we have sown dishonour—but we can henceforth avoid error, and go on recording only the good: thus insuring the future fair.

It has always been known, of course, that Mind was a mighty factor in the infinite equation, and *concentration* has been the watchword of every successful man, for without it force is dissipated; yet how many have failed to believe that the germ of success lay within them—its unfoldment subject to the same great law that governed the other, but retarded by the lack of motor power (Will) to put it in operation! How few children are taught to conserve the force that works in and through them, and is consequently wasted on utter trivialities! The rudiments of religion, so called, are taught to children;

but for the most part their instruction partakes of theology and its concepts.

Physical stature is reckoned by its length and breadth and thickness. Mental and spiritual stature must be likewise reckoned: not by the narrow groove of bigotry, not by a stigmatic side-glance at that Truth which is universal, and cannot be measured by the limited vision of one plane of consciousness, but by the broader view that comes within our range of vision when we have lived on the heights long enough to be established there, with no shadow of turning to the depths again. This consists in ceasing to transgress the law in what are termed "little things." It is the *great* Law that is bound up in the little things of every-day life—the Law of Love.

Affairs do not go to suit us. We are fretted and provoked, and we blame others. This is seeing the evil when we should take cognizance of only the good. The peculiarities of personality are too painfully evident to most people. We must learn to penetrate below the surface to the depths of Being where the Eternal Good ever waits to be brought to the threshold of consciousness. It is the privilege of those who have evolved to the realisation of Eternal Goodness to recognise *this only* in those who have not, thus raising them to the conscious plane, whence they, in turn, may influence others. Christ's injunction, "Feed my lambs," referred to spiritual food no less—but probably more—than to material food.

God is Love, and Love is the fulfilling of the Law. This is the whole thing in a nutshell. God in us is our love nature. We cannot love too much. The more we love, the more of the living God there is in us. We should love all mankind, seeing in these human forms an approach to the Divine—souls in their upward march to glorious freedom on higher planes. We should love the animals, for they are spirits too, and are responsive to kindly treatment. They are our brothers of the wilderness, and are part of the Universal Intelligence.

We are told to "preach the gospel to every living creature." We are to preach the gospel of love to everything that breathes. This includes that part of the Great Breath known as the Universal Consciousness. We must love the trees and flowers. And it will pay us to love the so-called inanimate things too. Even a machine will give better service if you love it.

The Great Spirit is everywhere. It pervades all things. Matter is an outer crust, a crystallisation of Mind. The trees and solids of which our earthly furniture is made were once full of sap, which is life. They came out of the invisible by a process of growth, and we utilised them. They will disintegrate again, and be worked up into other forms by the permeating Spirit—the resistless Energy of the universe that is constantly changing all things. Perpetual motion is the riddle of the universe. It is eternal vibration. Different rates of vibration give us different

planes of consciousness. On the physical plane one rate gives us sight, another hearing, etc. We are as gods, knowing good and evil. If we choose and abide by the good, ignoring the evil, we set in operation a law that gives us a higher and finer rate of vibration, which will in time open up our inner powers, bringing us still nearer to the Holy of Holies—the Divinity at the centre of our being. The undesirable qualities of our nature—the anger, hatred, envy, malice, and all selfishness—are like so many dense wrappings that keep us from manifesting or expressing our higher natures; our real selves. They are the tares; the chaff that is being burned up by the unquenchable fire; the rate of vibration that gives pain and misery.

The religion of the future will owe a great debt to science. Those faithful plodders, the scientists, have delved into the mysteries of life and given us golden grains of knowledge.—*Mind.*

LIVE FOR TRUTH.

Liv'st thou for self alone? Then art thou dead.

Liv'st thou for earth? Soon will thy life have fled.

Liv'st thou for Heaven? E'en yet sleep dims thine eye.

Oh! live for Truth, and thou shalt never die.

FLORENCE M. SOLOMON.

PURITY WITHIN.

BY SAM PILLING.

No parable of Christ, no precept of His disciples, nor any teaching of Scripture precludes the teaching of this doctrine of Purity within. Sin, with all its contagion, its contamination, and its supposed passing pleasures, is born of ignorance; it is harmful to man. Purity and sin cannot be co-occupiers of the same human tenement. As a man thinketh so is he. You point me to a gambler, then I can show you a pleasure-loving and gain-loving nature. You point me to a forger, a miser, a drunkard, a harlot, and no matter how intelligent, clever, and able, they lack enlightenment, right conceptions, pure desires, a sober mind, and pure emotions.

St. James exhorts all to "purify your hearts," this, according to the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, has to be done by an application of faith, when the disciple works out his own salvation. Thus all may become "blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish." Such are they who have Purity within.

Purity of Thought is one of the concomitants of Purity within. The suggestions

that come to man by thinking, link him to the angelic and all that is Divine, or chain him to the animal and all that is bestial. To secure and sustain Purity within, enlightened and elevated thought must be secured. Are we not reminded by Paul that we should "bring every thought into captivity and obedience to Christ." But alas! how frequently thought drives on, to action and character, the victim who has failed to capture thought. Man must not think as he likes until his likes are pure and blameless. A modern preacher has said, "Thought is raw material which is woven into disposition and shaped into habits and conduct," and applying this simile further, he says, "If my thought is coarse and rude, my disposition will be uncouth; if my thought be like fine silk, my conduct will never be fustian." Thought is consummated in action. The thought of gold to the exclusion of all else constitutes the miser, whether he may possess little or much. 'Tis not the possession of gold that makes the miser, but the thoughts about and of the gold which mould the character and make the miser.

Purity of Emotion is ever a concomitant of Purity within. Pure feelings cannot come of sinful flesh. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Yet man was made in the image of God, and is not flesh. Man is more than matter, higher than flesh. When the holiest emotions prompt a man to help others upward and heavenward, then are his emotions pure.

Purity of Desire. Self is ever uppermost where ignorance rules, but when we desire the good of all, when we realise that all should live for the fulfilment of this stanza—

“ Good, better, best,
Never let it rest
Till your good is better
And your better best ”—

then the desire to see universal righteousness, sobriety, and peace, will be an incentive to seek and to secure the realisation of it, and the blessings cannot be enjoyed until the conditions are complied with.

This Purity within can alone purify the world; for one cannot cleanse his thoughts, feelings, and heart without renewing, reforming, and, indeed, recreating the man. Man is a unit, but he is not isolated. As the drop in the ocean, so is man in the Universe; each has an influence, and all are influenced. And so the internal purity will have an external manifestation, and will be evidenced in speech and conduct.

Purity of Conversation, of Amusements, Reading, Friendships, Business, Government, Church, and Character, are the outcome of Purity within; and if such be not pure, then these, being an indicator, point to impurity within.

Sow love, and taste its fruitage pure,
Sow peace, and reap its harvest bright;
Sow sunbeams on the rock and moor,
And find a harvest-home of light.

HORATIUS BONAR.

HEART-PURITY.

“ Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.”

ALL blessèd are the pure in heart,
For they their God shall see,
A vision bright and true of Him
Who triumphed on the tree.

How can I such a heart procure
Who feel so much of sin?
Just keep it all outside thy life,
And keep thou pure within.

This heart, so fully blest of God,
Is not by magic wrought;
But is the outcome of a life
That has its pureness sought.

All may of God a vision have,
If they their souls keep pure;
Conditions met, obedience given,
And then the vision sure.

LILLIE MORROW.

SELFISHNESS is that life-impetus which overlooks the good, but ever ready to censure the evil in a person, principle, or thing. It is antithetical to all that is pure, humble, or kindly disposed—often contemptuous to the loving or humane as though unworthy of consideration. It is love reversed.—ARTHUR F. MILTON.

THOUGHT.

By W. H. EVANS.

THERE is no power in the universe of such tremendous import to man as that of rightly directed thought. The whole progress of humanity demonstrates this truth. Looking back over the past and contemplating the rude beginnings, one is struck with astonishment at the manner in which the achievements of the present were wrapped up in such apparently trivial beginnings. We see the promise of the ocean liner in the first floating log that was utilised by our progenitors for some definite end. In the signs and gestures of our primitive ancestors were contained the beginnings of speech; in the first rude scratches on a piece of rock were the commencement of books, of libraries, of art; in the first mode of conveying intelligence by runners and beacon fires were the rudiments of the telegraph and telephone; in the first rolling log used by man was the embodiment of our locomotive and all the wonders of mechanical science; in the first wonderment and simple appreciation of the music of nature was wrapped up the glories of the sublime harmonies of the great masters;

from the first observation of the necessity of individual liberty has come the inspiration of the great teachers who have simplified morality. Thus the road of the past is scattered over with the fragmentary beginnings of this power of thought.

The influence of a great thinker is never lost, and the thoughts of the great minds of the past are constantly incarnating in the minds of men. Confucius, Buddha, Christ, Socrates, Plato, and a host of great teachers and philosophers, still speak to us out of the dim vistas of time.

But no teacher, guide, or philosopher ever became such apart from *concentrated thought*. By this power alone can one gain a knowledge of the laws of life, and it is by giving fixed and faithful attention to the *little* things of life that the power is acquired.

A knowledge of the relation of thought to our everyday life is of the utmost importance. Seeing the wonderful possibilities that were latent in such *small* beginnings, we cannot fail to see the immense power we have in our own being. Our apparently insignificant thoughts often lead to great results.

Thus there is a great need to follow out the injunction of Paul: "whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things," and in the measure that you contemplate such things shall you become one with them by the power of thought.

THE JUDGMENT DAY.

TO-DAY is the Judgment Day. While you read these words you are judged. Every day, every moment has its appropriate judge—the divine knowledge within which approves or condemns. Why that poignant regret, and again this great peace? It is the judgment.

There is a prevailing idea that personal judgment is a possibility of a more or less distant future, and that as long as it is deferred there is a chance of escape. False philosophy and vain hope! In the meantime every moment brings its condemnation; distress and unhappiness overtake the unwise, and they call it the mysterious ways of Providence.

What is judgment in this sense? It is the law of the inevitable: it is cause and effect. The discernment of one's status viewed from the recognised ideal is the perception of it. Is there, then, no sequence in time of cause and effect, and thus a delay in judgment? There surely is sequence. Everything in experience has a precedent, and thus the line may reach out in the future and far back into the past. But judgment is not, therefore, delayed, for in the

realm of consciousness the true cause and the true effect are one, though from them consequences, in the ordinary sense, flow. Think a lofty thought; thereby you *are* lofty, not *will be* lofty at some future time. Do a despicable deed; thereby you are degraded, not in the future, but immediately.

We have become accustomed to fear consequences more than the condition or act from which they flow, and to look upon them alone as the judgment. In the truer sense judgment is not thus separate; it never lags; it is never tardy, and there is no escape from it; for whether we recognise it as such or not it is ever present as an inseparable part of the thought or act. The soul is continually weighing itself in the balance, and by its findings is inspired to realise higher things.—*Realisation.*

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.

On thyself insist, imbued
With gladness and elation.
On "trial" and "suffering" never brood—
Nor yet invite a passive mood
Of "tranquil resignation."

All that Is, is Truth and Good—
The "evil" is negation—
So, wisely let thine attitude
Be one of Affirmation.

R. DIMSDALE STOCKER.

DUTY.

BY DOROTHY M. BURT.

THERE is one sublime word in the English language, and that is "Duty," and yet it is a word so seldom understood in its true sense, but is looked upon as a stern, unsympathetic master, to whom is attributed all the unpleasant parts of life; we seem to forget that we ourselves have made the path upon which we tread—that we make our own duty. If the meaning of "Duty" were fully understood, life would lose a great deal of its sorrow. It should, I think, be one of the first lessons taught to a child; parents are apt to say every difficult or unpleasant task is duty, and so must be performed, though it is really "too bad." Would it not be better if they explained to the child that it is on a long journey, at the close of which is joy and peace, and that the length of the journey rests with it alone. Every time it seizes an opportunity of doing good or of overcoming a difficulty it shortens the road, but every time it lets an opportunity slip a few miles are added on; and then it should be made to understand that thousands of people are following the same path—the

path of Duty—and that it can try and help them on their way.

"Helping, when you meet them,
Lame dogs over styles."

When once this has been grasped, Duty is no longer a stern master, giving us as many hard tasks as possible, but a series of styles leading onward, beyond this life—but they are styles of our own making, and the less we build the less we have to climb. "For in the field of Destiny we reap as we have sown."

FORETHOUGHT.

FORTH went the Sower. People smiled,
And thought 'twas strange indeed.
No wife had he—no mate, no child,
Only himself to feed.
Yet springtime mild, or winter wild,
Alike he sowed his seed.

FORTH went the Reaper. People bowed,
And bared was every head.
They thronged him, that adoring crowd,
They crouched to him for bread
With blessings loud. And, justly proud,
That famished host he fed.

FLORENCE M. SOLOMON.

DISPUTATION often breeds hatred.

CONFUCIUS.

"Love begets love."

OUR TALK WITH CORRESPONDENTS.

Under this heading we are prepared, month by month, to give needful advice, and to deal with the questions and difficulties of our readers. To insure a reply in the subsequent issue, letters should reach us not later than the 7th.

Correspondents may choose their own nom-de-plume, but no letters will be answered unless accompanied by the full name and address as a guarantee of good faith.

D. W.—If a man will humbly carry out the instructions and commands of Jesus, he will be saved from all sin and affliction.

The sudden conversions of which you speak are continually taking place in other religions, not only the Christian; nor has a man necessarily become "spiritually exalted" when he has overcome drunkenness. Large numbers of worldly men have done this, and have experienced the joy of having conquered a bad habit. Pride, vanity, lust, hatred, covetousness, and condemnation are greater sins than drunkenness, and must be overcome before there can be any true spiritual exaltation.

Avoid all disputations about the Godhead or otherwise of Jesus; they are foolish and unprofitable, and lead to division and strife, but set to work in earnest to purify your heart and ennoble your life.

E. C.—You will find a detailed answer to your question, *re* the scriptural case of the man born blind, in the May issue of THE LIGHT OF REASON, for the year 1902. The sufferings of children have their germ in the children themselves. This life is not all of Life.

A. B.—When one begins to overcome a refractory temper it will, as you say, rise sometimes in the thoughts even when outwardly controlled, but by constant effort and by refusing to give way to it, it is at last eliminated from the mind altogether, and perfect victory is achieved.

P.—You ask and say,—“Do you believe in God and Prayer? I could not live without prayer; it is the guide and solace of my life, the strength of my being.”

Reply:—Belief (or disbelief) without knowledge is vain and useless. The man of Truth abandons all empty beliefs and disbeliefs, and searches for knowledge. He knows that he knows, and also that he does not know, and does not live in beliefs, opinions, and speculations.

Not by beliefs about Prayer and God is a man saved; not by disbeliefs about Prayer and God is a man lost. He is saved by practising Righteousness; he is lost by practising unrighteousness.

It is not necessary that you should give up anything which you are convinced is necessary for your progress. It is necessary that you should give up erroneous thoughts and acts; and if, when praying, you think only of the good of others, abandoning all desire for self, and follow it up by sacrificing self for the good of others in your daily life, then you will do well; but without self-control, self-purification, and self-sacrifice, prayer is vain.

M. L. C. E.—Yes, thought is a positive power, a cause bringing about its own effect, and the “combined love and sympathy of many” would certainly help others, and would soon bring about the means by which others could be aided directly and personally.

THE EDITOR.

A CORRECTION.—On page 130 of our March issue, fifteenth line, for “phenomena” read *phenomenon*.

THE "LIGHT OF REASON" GATHERINGS.

THE fourth meeting of the Liverpool and Birkenhead groups was held on March 7th, when the preceding month's subject, "The power of gladness," was very thoroughly discussed. Miss Tait read a paper showing how the craving after happiness is an instinct of the human race. This, like all such universal cravings, is God-given, to draw us on, past the light-hearted, careless joys of childhood and youth (beautiful in themselves) up to real and permanent gladness, product of the youth of the new-born soul; when after the storm and stress of this world's anxieties, it realises the fleeting nature of earthly joys and enters upon that union with Omnipotence, which leads even to the spiritualising of the body and the vanquishing of the last great enemy—death.

Miss Holden added that "our human souls can no more develop without gladness than flowers can bloom in the dark. Gladness alone can enable us to fully expand the petals of our hearts, and then only are we really capable of fulfilling our destiny, first to receive the divine blessing, and secondly to transmit it to others." Several other members gave valuable and helpful thoughts. Suggested subject for thought and discussion: "What the new thought means to all of us."

The usual meeting of the Birmingham Group took place on the 8th March. The attendance was large, and Mr. J. S. Akehurst read a very thoughtful and suggestive paper on "Memory." Three new members were present, and the members decided to co-operate in meeting the expenses of a public room, and the cost of books for circulation.

The West London Group held their monthly meeting on the 7th March, when Mr. Tovey gave an excellent lecture on "Marcus Aurelius," which he interspersed with extracts from "The Meditations."

A large gathering of the North London Group listened, on 11th March, to an excellent address by Miss Stacey, a well-known lecturer on Mental Science.

A Group is formed in Manchester.

REVIEWS OF MAGAZINES.

"Bible Review" for February, published monthly at Applegate, California; subscription 7s. 2d. per annum, contains masterly articles on "Self-Love or Divine Love," "The Two Gospels," "Man—His True Nature and Destiny," etc. The tone of this magazine is of the purest and loftiest kind; its aim is the regeneration of man by inward growth and realisation, and its pages are rich with inspiration and intelligence. Those who read it cannot fail to have their highest aspirations renewed, and will surely be influenced for good.

"Unity," published monthly by the Unity Tract Society, Kansas City, Mo., U.S.A., subscription 5s. per annum, is the organ of "The Society of Silent Unity." It always contains good reading for earnest, truth-seeking people, and the following standing announcement from its pages will give some idea of the nature of the magazine:—

"UNITY is a hand-book of Practical Christianity and Christian Healing. It sets forth the pure doctrine of Jesus Christ direct from the fountain head, 'The Holy Spirit, who will lead you into all Truth.' It is not the organ of any sect, but stands independent as an exponent of Practical Christianity, teaching the practical application in all the affairs of life of the doctrine of Jesus Christ; explaining the action of mind, and how it is the connecting link between God and man; how mind action affects the body, producing discord or harmony, sickness or health, and brings man into the understanding of Divine Law, harmony, health and peace, here and now."

The February issue contains, amongst other things, a highly instructive article on "Optimism," by J. P. Lathrop.

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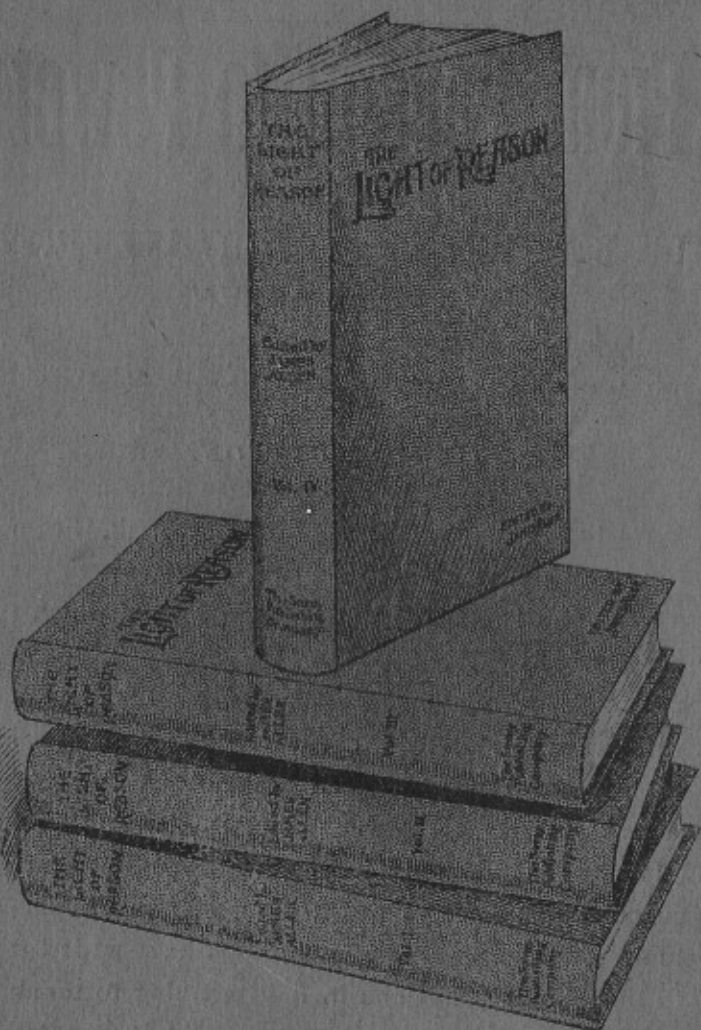
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