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THE
LIGHT OF REASON

EDITED BY

JAMES ALLEN.

"With thine actions preach,
And all hearts thou'lt reach."

FLORENCE M. SOLOMON.

PRICE

3d.



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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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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LIGHT OF REASON

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THE
LIGHT OF REASON

VOL. V. FEBRUARY 1st, 1904. No. 2.

EDITORIAL.

THE book, "Out From the Heart" (a sequel to "As a Man Thinketh"), is now ready, and may be ordered at once. Readers of "As a Man Thinketh" will do well to follow up with this book. The title originally selected for it was "Out of the Heart," but just as it was about to be placed in the hands of the printer, Mr. Dimsdale Stocker's booklet of poems (which we have this month reviewed) came to hand bearing the identical title, which rendered it necessary to make some alteration, and the present title was selected.

* * *

A very necessary equipment to the seeker of Truth is that of *Fearlessness*, and the

development of this quality is in exact ratio with the growth of spiritual enlightenment. Fear is not without a cause, and that cause is *ignorance*, and until the cause is removed, the effect will remain. From ignorance proceed confused thoughts, false beliefs, and selfishness; and fear is the dark shadow of these wrong conditions of mind. Whilst an opaque body intercepts the rays of the sun there will be a shadow cast, and so long as there are wrong conditions of heart and mind, the rays of the Light of Truth will be obscured in the mind, and the shadow of fear will be thrown upon the pathway of life.

* * *

The way to be rid of fear is to remove the conditions which create it. So long as a man is ignorant, superstitious, or selfish, he cannot escape fear. Men fear because they do not understand. This is seen even in the ordinary occurrences of life. An eclipse of the sun or moon strikes terror into the heart of the barbarian, and he regards it as an omen that the displeasure of his gods is about to be visited upon him. But the civilised man *knows* the nature of an eclipse and the method of its occurrence, and it is impossible for him to fear it. Again, how often a strange noise will terrify a whole household, but immediately the *cause* of the noise is discovered, fear turns to laughter.

* * *

The same law prevails in the moral realm. Men fear failure, disease, death, annihilation,

the anger of God or gods, and contamination and injury from their fellow-men, because they are ignorant of moral causes ; because they are totally in the dark concerning the Law of ethical causation. Where there is fear there is darkness of mind, lack of knowledge, and some form of selfishness ; therefore when a man fears, he should search within himself for the cause which gives rise to his fear with a view to removing it.

* * *

All selfishness is ignorance, is Egyptian darkness. Impurity is ignorance ; covetousness is ignorance ; slander is ignorance ; envy is ignorance ; dishonesty is ignorance ; lying and deception are ignorance ; wheresoever these conditions of mind are, confusion, superstition, and the slavery of fear prevail. Living in the darkness of these wrong conditions of mind, men institute innumerable false beliefs to account for their sufferings, and create illusions which become still further sources of fear, and give, reactively, added intensity to selfishness and hatred, and the dividing of man from man.

* * *

Man's sufferings are self-originated, and their cause subsists in the violated law of his being. His fears are self-generated, and spring from within. The sin-darkened mind cannot escape fear. The mind of the impure man is shadowed by three fears,—the fear of disease, the fear of consequences, and the fear of death. The mind of the

covetous man is shadowed by three fears,—the fear of loss, the fear of violence, and the fear of destitution. The mind of the dishonest man is shadowed by three fears,—the fear of the law, the fear of exposure, and fear for the safety of his reputation.

* * *

He who would slay fear, let him slay ignorance and sin, and as he succeeds in conquering self and harmonising his mind with Truth, the dark shadow of fear will pass away, and he will find that in all the universe there is absolutely nothing to fear; that all the dark evils which he feared had no substantial existence, but were merely the exaggerated reflections of his own selfish thoughts.

* * *

Fearlessness cannot be possessed until purity of heart and high moral rectitude are attained. What has the pure man, the sincere man, the man of rectitude to fear? What has he to fear who has nothing to conceal, who would not shrink from having his most private thoughts exposed? There is but one way, then, to dispel fear, and that is to obtain purity of heart and sterling rectitude of mind. Let studied breathings, bodily postures, and wordy affirmations be avoided as vain and profitless. Man can become fearless only by becoming pure.

* * *

For particulars concerning the Editor's visit to London on February 18th, our readers are referred to page 88.

THE STRAIT GATE.

BY W. H. GILL.

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate.”

By the gate, in this passage, is meant the way to acquire that holiness or perfection of the spiritual life without which no man can enter into a state of happiness. Entrance to the higher life is obtainable solely by individual effort and not, as some would fondly hope, by the ceremonial observances of religion, which indeed may be regarded as guides and finger-posts that lead up to the gate but do not open it. The gate is thereby, as it were, knocked at but nevertheless remains shut. For we read that certain came to the door and knocked, saying, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” and the answer was, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not.” These were the foolish virgins who took their lamps without oil in them, signifying those who have form without life—faith without love—those who attend to the outward symbol but not to the inward reality. A man is no better for saying his prayers if he does not regulate his life according to them. If, for instance, he prays for a temperate spirit and yet falls into the first temptation to drunkenness. If he prays for a diligent, industrious,

useful spirit, and yet leads an idle, slothful, indolent life. If he prays for a charitable temper, and yet allows himself to fall into a passion at the first cross to his self-love that comes his way. If he prays for lowliness, and yet takes the first opportunity to show his resentment or his contempt of a fellow-creature. If he prays for honesty, and yet takes the first sly opportunity to defraud and to deceive. If he prays for meekness, and yet takes the first opportunity to show what is called a "proper spirit" towards him who insults him by doing him all the harm he can. If he prays for a tender indulgence for the feelings and infirmities of his neighbour, and yet joins in the first jest at his failings and the laughs of ridicule against him. Of what value are the prayers of such a person? What is it that makes it so common a practice to sin and pray, and pray and sin alternately? Is it not this very thing—the difficulty of entering in at the strait gate; that is, the difficulty of acting in accordance with our prayers; the difficulty of acting contrary to our evil nature; the difficulty, in short, of that self-denial which our duty requires of us? "He that would come after Me must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

The hardship of entering in at the strait gate is the hardship of keeping the divine precepts and submitting ourselves with all patience to the yoke of Christ; for His yoke is not easy until we have become accustomed to it, and His burden is not light until we

can bear it with patience and cheerful submission. The hardship which the natural mind experiences in resisting temptation is "the Cross," and the self-denial is the resolution to take up that cross and bear it—not by substitution, but each man his own cross—that is, to accustom ourselves to resist temptation. And the only test of really bearing our cross, and of really denying ourselves is the doing of it cheerfully and not grudgingly or of necessity. The difficulty of a handicraft lasts only while we are learning it. What at first is supremely difficult—if not seemingly impossible—becomes every day less difficult, until at last, when we have mastered it, it becomes quite easy. For in all education difficulty ceases with the attainment of mastery. And so the gate is strait until by practice we have got used to it, and the yoke becomes easy when we have learnt the right way to bear it, and that can only be done by continual practice. Thus it is that the crosses of life become as nothing to him who habitually and systematically accustoms himself to bear them. And it is to him that overcometh that the crown of life is given—the crown of victory over the evils of our natural mind. This crown is the ease with which the yoke of Christ is borne. The ease which we experience is the proof, the confirmation, of our having become conquerors. And the Peace consequent upon the Warfare and the Victory are the reward. The crown of victory is but the symbol or outward sign of this peace, this hidden con-

solation or feeling of sweet confidence and repose. But the battle must first be fought—the battle with our Inward Enemies, and their name is legion. A good life—a life worth living—does not consist in mere hearing of our duty in sermons, and formulas, and books; nor in the mere saying of prayers, or the mere working up of our feelings into a religious fervour of ecstasy by various forms of artistic and hypnotic devices such as exquisite music, painted windows, the odour of incense, pompous processions, or the soothing influence of a dim religious light. All these things—sometimes called “means of grace”—however helpful they may be to some minds, are certainly not the Christian warfare. They are at most but the sound of the trumpet whereby the soldier is aroused to the battle. The battle itself consists of quiet, steady, manful resistance of evil not outside of us but within. It is not mere “passive resistance” to an outward force, but a hard, desperate, hand-to-hand struggle with our passions. It is a strife for self-mastery. For instance, you are tempted to anger. Here is the strife, here is the combat between reason and folly, between good and evil, between passion and patience. You are in a strait. To you the way to Life is yet a *strait* gate unless you have by repeated resistance obtained the victory. If you have been used to give way, to you it is a *strait* gate. For example, some poor person—a friend or neighbour—has come into unlooked-for good fortune. You ought

to rejoice at this, but your selfish nature is tempted to envy. To you the way to Life is yet a *strait* gate unless by repeated resistance you have gotten the victory. If you have been used to indulge in your evil propensity, to you it is a *strait* gate. You wish for wealth, and a temptation is before you to take a sly advantage. It is your duty to defy this impulse, but to you the way to Life is yet a *strait* gate unless by repeated resistance you have overcome your selfish nature. You are prompted to some fascination, to some personal indulgence. You are in a strait; you ought to flee from the seduction; you ought to say, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" To you the way of Life is yet a *strait* gate, and will continue so until by constant habit you have gotten the victory.

The Inward Enemies we have to overcome are the passions and vices of the mind, and as we master these, one after another, our thoughts and affections are gradually changed. Heaven is opened within us. We have entered the gate. And the way to overcome those latent vices is to habituate ourselves to a regular and strenuous resistance of evil within ourselves until self-indulgence ceases to be pleasing to us, and self-denial ceases to be irksome. Until, in fact, our affections become changed, and we do that as an intense pleasure which at present we do as a painful task—until we come into the liberty of Christ—the freedom to will and to do constantly the things which are true. And this will be the case after

some perseverance in the way of duty, for so the Master has promised: "He that hath My commandments, he it is that loveth Me, and I will love him, and will come unto him and make My abode with him and manifest Myself unto him"—that is to say, by His peace which is thus to be acquired.

And you, dear friend, whoever you be that read these plain words, say not, as one so often hears, that you cannot do this without the Grace of God, and that you must wait until it comes to you in answer to your prayer. As well might you cry out for the light of day while the sun shines around you. *That* is the Grace of God. You have it already in the very *wish* to have it, and it is ever present with you, operating around you, and within you, in the spiritual laws of your nature. As well might you say that you cannot walk without feet, while you *have* feet; or that you cannot work without hands, while you *have* hands; or that you cannot see without eyes, while you *have* eyes. As you have limbs for the motion of your body, so also have you reason and liberty for the motion of your mind.

Clearly, then, it is your duty, as a reasonable and responsible being, to use with all diligence that power and that freedom which are necessary for your salvation.

GOOD men instruct one another.

LAO-TZE.

DO AND LIVE.

"If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments."—Matt. xix. 17.

KEEP the commandments : it is less than
naught
To know and to approve them with thy
mind,
If to obedience thou giv'st no thought.
So if thou would'st life's richest treasure
find,
Live thy belief : clothe thou each new-born
truth
With garments of thy personality ;
So shall thy spirit keep perpetual youth,
Thy God-bound wishes soar eternally,
And thou shalt stand a beacon light sublime,
Pointing Heaven's pathway through the mists
of time.

FLORENCE M. SOLOMON.

THE superior man practises before he
preaches.—CONFUCIUS.

HE that endeavours really to mortify his
lusts and to comply with that truth in his
life which his conscience is convinced of, is
nearer a Christian, though he never heard of
Christ, than he that believes all the vulgar
articles of the Christian faith, and plainly
denyeth Christ in his life.

DR. RALPH CUDWORTH.

"COME UNTO ME."

BY MARIELLA.

IN the soft cool glory of an autumn afternoon I found my way to the top of a hill. In the valley below me were cattle, peacefully grazing in meadows through which there passed a river chattering loudly of its haste to reach the sea. From the chimney of a solitary farm-house came wreaths of smoke that seemed to reveal a probable cosy interior. The whole scene breathed peace and contentment: and as I gazed on it my spirit became calm, my eyes involuntarily closed.

It must have been a trance that possessed me, for the valley which had smiled in the sunshine became quite dark, save that here and there it was lighted by lurid flames that evidently arose from earth-fires. The river ceased to hurry along and became as silent as the waters of the nether-world. It was a vision of the world of Passion that I saw before me. And upon the shadowy faces which peopled that world what anguish, what bitter hatred those lurid flames revealed! I saw that many envious eyes followed the progress of a girl whose beauty not even the flames could wholly distort. Her flowing

robes swayed to and fro as, in perfect grace of movement, she advanced to the music of a mandoline. Lovers with eager, yet half-mocking faces, crowded round her: and she idly smiled on each in turn, proud in her conscious beauty, scornful of envious glances, heedless of the dark shadows that gathered on the faces of those on whom she smiled no longer. At length the triumphal procession was checked by one who refused to be cast aside as no longer amusing. I saw him bind the woman to him with golden chains, so that her steps were no longer free. O the torture that she endured! I could not bear to see her suffering, and as I turned to look in another direction I heard a faint, yet clear voice saying, "Come unto Me."

But although from my distant station I heard the voice, the stricken victims of passions were deaf apparently to its entreaty. One of them had cast himself headlong into one of the earth-fires and was now beyond sight or sound. Another was drowning the gentle invitation in sounds of revelry and laughter, and his bleared eyes and hoarse voice betrayed the influence of wine. Some turned their heads in the direction of the sound, but somehow did not understand its meaning. At last I saw with relief that a man was standing as though transfixed by a beautiful vision. His face had lost its hopeless expression: and following the direction of his gaze I saw a radiant form at once human and Divine. It was indeed the Christ who was standing, I saw, at the

entrance to a steep and rocky path, on which there shone a light that seemed to issue from Himself. On the path I could see pilgrims walking with drooping heads and making very slow progress; but on following the path with my eyes I saw that it grew ever more brilliantly lighted and that, when the steep beginning had been left behind, progress seemed more rapid and joyful.

When I had seen the man who first drew my attention to the voice enter the Shining Way, my eyes again sought the woman whose sufferings had been so painful to witness. I found her at last: at her feet was an awful fiery abyss: in her eyes was a strange wild light: all her winsome beauty was gone; the mandoline was cast away, while her hands that had made sweet music were clasped in agony.

"Come unto Me," said the voice again, and to my great relief the woman heard and looked towards the Speaker. As she did so the light from the Radiant Presence slowly transformed her passion-dimmed eyes, so that in them there dawned a peace like that which belongs to childhood. With peace came strength, and meekly but steadfastly the woman entered the Shining Way, steep and difficult though it was.

"Ah!" cried I aloud in mingled relief and sadness. "Why are there so few who hear?"

As though in answer to my question, the light grew stronger and I saw that there were thousands of shining roads all converging into that I had first seen. I saw men and

women, who seemed asleep, standing on them: I saw others running hither and thither in feverish excitement: others were walking along timidly, starting aside at every unusual sight or sound. But always that patient, untiring voice rang soft and clear through the passion-laden air, saying: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you Rest."

Darkness was falling on the earth when normal vision returned to my body on the hill-side. The young moon was shining feebly in the fading glow of the western sky: the stars were twinkling out in groups as though to give her a shy welcome: I could hear again the river babbling its innocent story to the shadows down below. Rest! Rest! What was it? It was not stillness, not stagnation, of that I was sure when I remembered the vision of the Shining Way. Life, abundant, joy-inspiring life was there; but it was lived free from conflicting emotions and influences. Purity, Truth, and Love were its eternally-ruling forces: sin, falsehood, and hatred were renounced for ever by those who accepted the invitation to the Land of Rest: and I understood that as the renunciation of the pilgrims became perfect the Shining Way grew ever more smooth under their feet.

GOOD people shine from afar like the snowy mountains; bad people are not seen, like arrows shot by night.—BUDDHA.

IMPERSONAL LAW.

THE Great Law in which the whole creation lives, moves, and has its being, works with a set aim for the growth and rise of all, for the uplifting of the human race, for transmuting the animal man into a Divine Being. The Law came out, if ever it had a beginning, from the imperturbable Realm of Peace, and man, the eldest-born of that Law, the flower of evolution, the glory of God on earth, can never find rest from his unending and tiresome toils till he reaches that realm whence the Law originally moved forward for the greater splendour of the One Perfection. In his nether life, man, wedded to woe and worry, by deliberate choice, will never be able to attain peace till he shuts fast all the gates of his divine citadel against the endless strifes that rush through his soul and soil her mantle of silver purity.

Not until each entity shall work for all, and not until each unit shall realise himself as an organ of God to evolve harmony for the race, will sorrow cease, and pain be a thing of the past.

What is that vicious quality of the heart

of the unspiritual which ever and anon goads him to find fault with every being in the world except his pitiful self? Why is it that he tries to regenerate humanity but will never first regenerate himself?

For many men there is nothing of so absorbing an interest as their own crumbling personalities, the frail short-lived flesh, heir of decay and death, companion of disease and worms, made so much of, desired, embraced, and worshipped, instead of the Truth which resideth therein. Owing to this inordinate love of the impermanent, the benighted lower self refuses to see God's huge creation surging on all sides of him, having but the same goal and same aspiration with him. But the mischief reaches its height when the heart is allowed to go away from the Great Law which has no favourites, and to which the good and the bad, the just and the unjust, are alike. There is no factor so potent in man to further or put back his spirituality, as his heart which, when purified and exalted, is the seat and centre of all that is noble and glorious within him. An Indian sage has expressed that he is the high priest of God who is pure in heart, and not he who knows all the Vedas by heart.

Not until the heart has ventured to take upon itself the heavy burden of the woes of the world; not until each heart has learnt the talisman of expanding in size to receive the hearts of all human beings, does the Divine Lord remain imperturbably quiet

within each one of us. Not that He does not exist within us, but that we do not know the art of arousing Him. The panacea of human woes lies in our own hands, and it is this: that each of us, to the best of his might, shall endeavour to expand his heart. The heart works magic after expansion and purification, it soars above time and space; its aspirations are not of the earth earthy, but the canker of personality being killed past resurrection, it feels the presence of God within itself, nay, identifies itself with Him. The secret of human life is more in the heart than in the head, and the way to Truth is to first purge the heart of its impurities. "Seek in the heart the source of evil, and expunge it." That man alone is able to set himself free from sins and bestow divinity upon his heart, who does not sit in judgment upon the actions of others but has a very purring eye for his own failings; who sees in others only the One Eternal Life which is stainless and spotless, but in himself the embodiment of the evils of bearing that Life. The sage Kabir once said that he went through the four corners of the world and found vice nowhere except within his own heart. A consciousness of vice within ourselves is the best passport of improvement; a knowledge of our own moral failings helps us more in removing them than setting our own wickedness up to ferret out the sins of others. Man's mission in life is to do good and be good, and be good to itself. He who wipes away one single woe of

humanity may be said to have lived in the company of God ; he is a true Saviour.

The Light of the East.

THE PREACHER.

IN his dreary room
On a lonely flat,
'Mid the twilight gloom,
Long the Preacher sat,
Thinking with a sigh
Of the days gone by.

He had started well ;
Mind and soul on fire
God's vast love to tell.
Others to inspire ;
But heart, hand, and brain,
All had toiled in vain.

Many far less learned
(Bitterly he mused)
Souls to God had turned,
Why was *he* refused
Sign of leaf or root
Pledging future fruit ?

Were his words unwise ?
Were his words untrue ?
Did he ill-advise
That his seeds ne'er grew ?
Oft, not once or twice,
Had he asked advice.

And one said, " Be stern,
Naught is strong as fear ;"
Others cried—" Nay, spurn
All that is severe."
Each in turn he hailed,
Each in turn had failed.

So he sat apart
In his dreary room,
With his tender heart
Breaking in the gloom.
Then from out his doze
Suddenly he rose.

And his heart was light,
And his smile was good,
And he proved his right
To God's Fatherhood ;
And, though much he dared,
Ne'er again despaired.

Wouldst thou know the word,
Freighted with such power,
Which the Preacher heard
In his darkest hour ?
Wouldst *thou* own its spell,
And succeed as well ?

Listen ! for this truth,
Precious is as brief,
And in age or youth
E'er will banish grief—
" *With thine actions preach,
And all hearts thou'll reach.*"

FLORENCE M. SOLOMON.

LETTERS OF A TRUTH-SEEKER.

I.—LIFE FROM WITHIN.

BY HARRY J. STONE.

SOMEWHERE in the progress of every individual there comes a great yearning for a broader, higher life ; a life of more service and fuller expression. This new life springs from within, fashions and develops in the daily thought, and seeks manifestation in the world of deed and action. Selfish thought no longer supplies its needs, and one by one the fetters of error that bind the new aspirations are broken. Freedom of thought is as necessary to development as light to the young plant, and a broader, more beautiful conception of life is the natural result of breaking through these self-made barriers by which the thoughts have been cramped. Clinging to the old love of forms and shadows must cease. We have been seeking the Infinite Spirit within the limits of a perishable Creed, at special times, or in particular places ; yet only when the search is turned within the Soul, do we discover the true Source of Knowledge, and unmistakable evidence of its unity with all Life. We

begin to find too, that side by side with the attempt to express Truth in service, the power to discern Truth is developed, apart from all historical documents or ancient dogmas. Once the power has broken upon the life, then, dimly at first, but ever more clearly does the light of reason dispel the darkness of ignorance, until the New Life seems to throb in direct harmony with the Soul of All Things. Realising in this way its unity with the Infinite, the soul within becomes a garden of beautiful thoughts, needing only to be fostered to blossom into deeds of kindness in the world. The same messages of Universal Peace and Goodwill are constantly coming to all those who are thus opening themselves to the power of the Divine Love. For them no class or race distinctions exist, because all believe in the One Human Brotherhood, and seek to apply that ideal to the daily thought and deed.

"The Kingdom of God is within you," said a Great Teacher, and God is Love. There is then good reason why we should "seek first the Kingdom of God," for does it not follow that by earnestly and sincerely seeking within the "Kingdom," love will express itself in the new life that is bursting forth. What better can we do than to be true to the promptings of the truth within? If we honestly do this we shall find the thoughts becoming positive and progressive. One central truth clearly grasped, and *realised in the daily life*, is sufficient to develop a complete line of thought and con-

duct by which the whole life may be transformed. If we feel such a truth evolving within the thought, and are ready to make it practical, let us drop all long-cherished cramping ideas, so that the Higher Life may freely express itself. In this way shall we know Heaven here and now, and no longer imagine it a place to reach in some future existence.

Fearlessly then will we step forward, knowing that there must be those who differ from us, but determined always to preserve towards them an attitude of love and gentleness. Nor will we waste time in remorse. Rightly viewed, each failure is the stepping-stone to a higher life; we extract its lesson, and go forward on the strength of the gathered experience. We are nearing the end of our journey in the Wilderness. The heart is glad at the ever-widening view ahead, for the Land of Freedom and Love is always broad and full of promise.

LIFE of germinating grain ;
Life of all things, land and main ;
Life of angel as of clod---
Love—thou spirit, breath of God !

M. A. P.

FEAR'S large promiser ; who subject live
To that base passion, know not what they
give.

DRYDEN.

RESOLVE.

BY JAMES ALLEN.

RESOLVE is the directing and impelling force in individual progress. Without it no substantial work can be accomplished. Not until a man brings resolution to bear upon his life does he consciously and rapidly develop, for a life without resolution is a life without aims, and a life without aims is a drifting and unstable thing.

Resolve may, of course, be linked to downward tendencies, but it is more usually the companion of noble aims and lofty ideals, and I am dealing with it in this its highest use and application.

When a man makes a resolve, it means that he is dissatisfied with his condition, and is commencing to take himself in hand with a view to producing a better piece of workmanship out of the mental materials of which his character and life are composed, and in so far as he is true to his resolution, will he succeed in accomplishing his purpose.

The vows of the saintly ones are holy resolutions directed toward some victory over self, and the beautiful achievements of holy men and the glorious conquests of the

Divine Teachers were rendered possible and actual by the pursuit of unswerving resolve.

To arrive at the fixed determination to walk a higher path than heretofore, although it reveals the great difficulties which have to be surmounted, it yet makes possible the treading of that path, and illuminates its dark places with the golden halo of success.

The true resolve is the crisis of long thought, protracted struggle, or fervent but unsatisfied aspiration. It is no light thing, no whimsical impulse or vague desire, but a solemn and irrevocable determination not to rest nor cease from effort until the high purpose which is held in view is fully accomplished.

Half-hearted and premature resolve is no resolve at all, and is shattered at the first difficulty.

A man should be slow to form a resolve. He should searchingly examine his position and take into consideration every circumstance and difficulty connected with his decision, and should be fully prepared to meet them. He should be sure that he completely understands the nature of his resolution, that his mind is finally made up, and that he is without doubt and fear in the matter. With the mind thus prepared, the resolve that is formed will not be departed from, and by the aid of it a man will, in due time, accomplish his strong purpose. Hasty resolves are futile. The mind must be fortified to endure.

Immediately the resolution to walk a

higher path is made, temptation and trial begin. Men have complained to me that no sooner have they decided to lead a truer and nobler life than they have been overwhelmed with such a torrent of new temptations and difficulties as made their position almost unendurable ; and many men, because of this, relinquish their resolve.

But these temptations and trials are a necessary part of the work of regeneration upon which the man has decided, and must be hailed as friends and met with courage if the resolve is to do its work. For what is the real nature of a resolve ? Is it not the sudden checking of a particular stream of conduct, and the endeavour to open up an entirely new channel ? Think of an engineer who decides to turn the course of a powerfully running stream or river in another direction. He must first cut his new channel, and must take every precaution to avoid failure in the carrying out of his undertaking. But when he comes to the all-important task of directing the stream into its new channel, then the flowing force which for ages has steadily pursued its accustomed course, becomes refractory, and all the patience and care and skill of the engineer will be required for the successful completion of the work. It is even so with the man who determines to turn his course of conduct in another and higher direction. Having prepared his mind, which is the cutting of a new channel, he then proceeds to the work of re-directing his mental forces—which have

hitherto flowed on uninterruptedly—into the new course. Immediately this is attempted, the arrested energy begins to assert itself in the form of powerful temptations and trials hitherto unknown and unencountered. And this is exactly as it should be ; it is the law ; and the same law that is in the water is in the mind. No man can improve upon the established law of things, but he can learn to understand the law instead of complaining, and wishing things were different. The man who understands all that is involved in the regeneration of his mind will "glory in tribulation," knowing that only by passing through it can he gain strength, obtain purity of heart, and arrive at peace. And as the engineer at last (perhaps after many mistakes and failures) succeeds in getting the stream to flow on peacefully in the broader and better channel, and the turbulence of the water is spent, and all dams can be removed, so the man of resolve at last succeeds in directing his thoughts and acts into the better and nobler way to which he aspires, and temptations and trials give place to steadfast strength and settled peace.

He whose life is not in harmony with his conscience, and who is anxious to remedy his mind and conduct in a particular direction, let him first mature his purpose by earnest thought and self-examination, and having arrived at a final conclusion, let him frame his resolve, and having done so let him not swerve from it, let him remain true to his decision under all circumstances, and

he cannot fail to achieve his good purpose ; for the Great Law ever shields and protects him who, no matter how deep his sins, or how great and many his failures and mistakes, has, deep in his heart, resolved upon the finding of a better way, and every obstacle must at last give way before a matured and unshaken resolve.

OUT OF THE NIGHT.

OUT of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not whined nor cried aloud ;
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll ;
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

Selected.

JUSTICE reigns in the moral world as equilibrium does in the physical world ; and the destiny of souls is but the perpetual result of their capabilities, their aspirations, and, consequently, of their works.—CAMILLE FLAMMARION.

THE RELATION OF THE LAW TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY ERNEST R. SHEARMUR.

IN the New Testament we are struck by two seemingly opposite ways of speaking about law. St. Paul says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," while, according to St. Matthew, we find our Lord Himself uses the words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

This contradiction in appearance can only be solved by a study of the meaning of the term "law."

Complaints are often made that there is no such thing as absolute law as applied to human conduct. The laws of nature, seeing that they are independent of man's will and pleasure, are of necessity absolute. On the other hand, the rules established in a community or state for the guidance and control of the inhabitants are purely arbitrary, since they are made by man. We thus see at the outset that the term law can be studied under two heads: first, the law between God and man, which is absolute; second,

the law between man and man, which is arbitrary.

The law of God clearly assumes two aspects, the natural and the revealed. In nature the divine law touches human life more particularly in the shape of laws of health, where an unchanging order is enforced by automatic and invariable penalties. A lack of proper sanitation, a want of attention to domestic hygiene, a neglect of the rules of nervous health through immorality in its various forms—all these are inevitably punished by the very facts of the case. The universality order in nature becomes more and more evident to the scientist the more he advances with his studies and investigations. The Hebrews had a vague conception of it, but it has been left almost to our own generation to verify the truth in detail.

God's ways with men are revealed not only in the works of nature, but also and chiefly in the communication of Himself to the good man. A foremost truth of the Hebrew religion was that God was specially present with the honest and devout man. The Hebrews thus gave to Abraham the name of the friend of God. The same truth gave rise to the idea so often expressed of the Supreme choosing as his dwelling-place the heart of the humble and honest man. In support also there are the words of Christ, "The pure in heart shall see God."

By the time of Christ a mechanical and literal interpretation of the law had set in and a burden too heavy to support was laid

on men's shoulders by the scribes. Infringement of such a law was therefore inevitable. The reasons for the two statements made at the beginning can now be seen. Christ did not destroy the law: He summed it up in the practice of love to God and love to man.

The love of which Christ speaks as the fulfilling of the law is not, however, simply a state of mind or a passing emotion, but a living principle, which, if it truly exists, must show itself in the life and deeds of a man.

It is the teaching of Christ that we are to take the Will of God, as expressed in the law, or reason of all things, to be the principle of our own will. This does not mean that we are to be fatalists, or to blindly subject ourselves. On the contrary, it is the use of all our knowledge and all our moral powers, in accordance with law, to bring about the coming of the kingdom in the soul of every human being. Again, the Christian life consists not in the ministry to the self-indulgence of others, but in a combined effort towards securing a fuller and higher life for the communion of which we are members.

In conclusion, the following passages, taken from the Scriptures, confirm what has been above stated.

The law of his God is in his heart.

(Psalm xxxvii. 31.)

The law is within my heart. (Psalm xl. 8.)

The law of the wise is a fountain of life.

(Proverbs xiii. 14.)

The law is holy. (Romans vii. 12.)

The law is spiritual. (Romans vii. 14.)

The law was our schoolmaster.

(Galatians iii. 24.)

The law is not made for a righteous man.

(1 Timothy i. 9.)

For whosoever shall keep the whole law,
and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of
all. (James ii. 10.)

THE DIVINE JUSTICE.

THE only destiny there is for thee
In store, there is, dear friend, for every
man ;
For he who *wills* I count it certain can
(Nay must) create the fate that is to be.

God doth not arbitrate for you and me—
We pass the sentence after life's brief span ;
It hath been so indeed since time began :
Our own words judge us and our own eyes
see.

Whatever ill in act or thought was done—
Who shall evade the Law? No man ; not
one.

In equal justice all is meted out ;
For for another's sin can suffer none.
Each only brings his own deserts about—
Who sows the seed *reaps* after, have no
doubt.

R. DIMSDALE STOCKER.

THE SACRED CIRCLE.

BY TRUTHSEEKER.

IN ancient times the circle had a deep significance among thoughtful men in many nations. As the symbol of eternity many regarded it as not only suggestive, but also as possessing a mystic power belonging to no other figure, and many of the earlier religions appear to have constructed their places of worship and sacrifice in circles, as at Stonehenge and elsewhere. We do not know all the possibilities of moral and spiritual teaching which in those early prehistoric days the wiser and more enlightened souls may have derived from this almost universal symbol. We see that every far-reaching belief has had its due effect on the growth and development of the race, and down the long ages of evolution mankind have passed through stage after stage of growth and progress, and amidst much of superstition and childish simplicity there has been also mingled with the very childishness and superstition that which has lifted some, if not all, into a realm of spiritual vision, from whence a new starting point has been possible, and deeper, truer, and higher paths of life have been entered upon.

So from the symbol of the old sacred circle we may possibly get a new lesson in the progressive spiritual life by which our souls may afresh be lifted into a stage of renewed thoughtfulness and increasing power and virtue ; for is not every human soul the centre of a circle, with influence radiating to an unknown circumference ? Does not the central love of each soul diffuse "its power for good or evil almost beyond our thought."

Most suggestive is the old biblical phrase so often used by the writers of Jewish history : "He did that which was evil and made Israel to sin," especially when contrasted with the record of the life of Jesus, when it is said of Him : "He went about doing good." These two examples may be taken as types of the contrasted lines of those who have exercised a wide influence on their fellow-men. We look almost with horror upon the circle of misery, death, and destruction caused by the lives of such men as Alexander, Cæsar, or Napoleon, whilst we rejoice in the mighty influence for good radiating from an Isaiah, a Paul, a Shakespeare, or a Whittier.

The circle of the tyrant and destroyer contrasts as darkness to light with the circle of the saintly and the wise. Who can measure the difference between the life—power of a Nero and a Marcus Aurelius ? But, coming to the simpler and more practical questions of what can be done with the common life of every ordinary man and woman, do we know how possible it may

be for each of us to become centres of sacred circles, ever widening with increasing beneficence? Every living soul walking in the ways of holiness and peace must every day be sending out from such a centre thoughts and words and deeds which never die. We venerate the exalted, transcendent soul who blesses the world with thoughts that soar and words that burn; but we may also be exceeding glad that every common life contains the central power of making itself a circle of influence beyond the dreams of poets.

The power of one loving, self-sacrificing soul, in the most obscure position in relation to public life, may be an eternal circle of light and truth. When Jesus took a little child and set him as the type of those in the Kingdom of Heaven, He wanted us to understand the value and beauty of a gentle, simple, and innocent life, and in all such lives we have the real and wonderful sacred circles from which flow forth the common graces and wholesome virtues the world needs to keep it sweet. We can see the value of the sacred circle as showing the radiant power emanating from Confucius, or Buddha, or Jesus; but if we could but learn that each man is also a "Son of God," and may become a centre of Light and Love and Peace, ever extending an influence for Truth and Righteousness, what a growth in moral sanity, and even saintliness, might begin and be continued in an ever-widening circle of power essentially divine! How soon the

"war drum" might be exchanged for the "olive branch," and the selfish aims of men and nations be superseded by universal benevolence and brotherhood. The great destructive circles of the warriors and the tyrannical circles of the despots, or would-be despots, must in the end give place to wiser and better counsels, and nobler and higher aims. The reign of force and fraud, and the seeming victory of evil over good, must finally give place to circles of ever extending goodness such as a modern poet foresees and proclaims when he writes—

"The Cæsars and the Alexanders pass,
Whilst he that drank the hemlock, he that drank
The Cup more dread on Calvary's hill, remain
Servants and mighty conquerors of the world."

However far we may seem to fall below the poet's ideal to-day, the fact remains that Reason and Righteousness and Purity of heart must be the centres from which the regeneration of man will flow with ever-growing power, till the good leaven of holiness shall have leavened the whole of our humanity, and the sacred circle of man shall be co-extensive with the race, with every man for a centre of that one peculiar good gift he is able to communicate, and all striving together for a common end—the realisation of Truth and Beauty within the soul and throughout the world, and to diffuse—

"The Love which moves the sun and the other stars."

HUMILITY.

BY EMMA ALLUM.

HUMILITY is the keynote of success. The arrogant and the conceited are not so likely to succeed even in the ordinary events of everyday life as the humble, as they are not willing to assist and to do as others wish, but like to take the lead in all things, whether fitted for the part or not; whereas the humble and lowly person is always trying to be of use to his fellow-man, his chief desire being to give, not to gain; to serve, not to rule.

The longer I live, the more the virtue of humility appeals to me; and though there are many among those who consider themselves to be very worldly-wise who tell us that it is foolish to do so much for others, that we shall be down-trodden altogether if we do not assert ourselves, yet I venture to think they are wrong, and that even as regards the things of this world only, the humble prosper more than the arrogant (though they are working for a far higher goal), because they and their good works are appreciated. Unselfishness is appreciated in others, even by those who have themselves

no practical acquaintance with it ; and besides, the desire to serve causes the humble worker, in whatever grade of life, to try, at least to excel in that he undertakes, and be he a common labourer only, or a world-renowned artist, he is ever seeking to improve his work ; his standard of excellence is still far ahead of his attainments, and though others may look on in admiring wonder and give genuine and well-deserved praise, the worker himself, with true humility, sees that there are still farther and greater heights to attain, and therefore sedulously and unostentatiously works on. And so it comes to pass that the " meek inherit the earth," and even if they do not succeed in getting into the high places of this world, they " inherit the earth in a very special sense, as they enjoy it, and love its natural riches and beauties better because of the enjoyment of their work in it. And if this is the joy of the humble worker, in the things of this world, how far deeper and greater must be the joy of the humble student of the things pertaining to the soul, and God, and Heaven, for his eyes are open to all that is true and pure and beautiful around him ; and how infinitely more beautiful and successful must his life be ! The secret of the success of the humble lies in his expecting nothing ; he does not expect reward, therefore he never feels defeated ; neither does he ever feel highly elated by his success, as he, more than others, knows that he is as yet only on the threshold of Infinite Knowledge, and is

content to slowly and painstakingly climb it, rung by rung. Because of that, all the good things, and noble thoughts, and beautiful and holy desires stream down from the highest heavens, and are borne to him; they always attend upon the humble soul, whose desires are pure, and thus is fulfilled the promise "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you," and having sought the Kingdom of God and found it, (for "everyone that seeketh, findeth"), he proceeds to enter in and dwell there, for "to him that knocketh it shall be opened," and henceforth he will "dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

REMEMBER that the possibilities of good are greater than the possibilities of evil, and you have the key to Heaven.

BISHOP BROOKS.

HE who has made one stern sacrifice of self, has acquired more than he will ever glean from the odds-and-ends of popular philosophy.—LORD LYTTON.

THE end of life is not a thought, but an action—to educate our own hearts by deeds of Love, and to be the instrument of blessing to our brother men.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

HAPPY is he who has overcome all selfishness; happy is he who has attained peace; happy is he who has found the Truth.—BUDDHA.

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

THE universe pays every man in his own coin; if you smile it smiles upon you in return; if you frown you will be frowned at; if you sing you will be invited into gay company; if you think you will be entertained by thinkers; and if you love the world and earnestly seek for the good that is therein, you will be surrounded by loving friends and nature will pour into your lap the treasures of the earth. Censure, criticise, and hate, and you will be censured, criticised, and hated by your fellow-men. Every seed brings forth after its kind. Mistrust begets mistrust, jealousy begets jealousy, hatred begets hatred, and confidence begets confidence; kindness begets kindness; love begets love. Resist and you will be resisted. To meet the aggressive assault every entity rises up rigid and impenetrable—while yonder mountain of granite melts and floats away on the bosom of the river of love.—ZIMMERMAN.

EXPERIENCE proves disobedience to be followed by pain, disorder, and suffering. A perversion of intelligence or reason, such as intemperance, gluttony, or lust, inherits pain and disease. A perversion of the will, such as injustice, arrogance, or disorderly conduct, inherits war, strife, and servitude. A perversion of love, such as deceit, treachery, or fraud, inherits trouble, trials, misfortunes.—ARTHUR F. MILTON.

THE "LIGHT OF REASON" GATHERINGS.

THE first meeting of the Liverpool and Birkenhead Group took place at the residence of Miss Baxter, on December 7th, when a definite course of action for future meetings was arranged. One of the members read a paper bearing upon "The recognition of man's Divine Sonship, or the practical identity of the human and Divine Spirit." Confirmative quotations were given from the Upanishads, Plato, Philo, Origen, Athanasius, Max Müller, Henry Wood, Charles Newcomb, and St. John's Gospel. Reference was also made to the article, "God and Man," in the September (1903) issue of THE LIGHT OF REASON.

The second meeting was held on January the 4th, when Miss Anna K. Holden read an excellent paper on "Matter and Spirit," in which she spoke of the spiritual unity of all things, including so-called "dead matter," and of the growing power and accumulating revelations of Natural Science. One of Sir Oliver Lodge's articles, entitled "Where Science Stands To-Day," and the first chapter from "The Will to be Well," were also read.

The Secretary of this Group is Mrs. Duckworth, The Heys, Eastham, near Birkenhead.

At the usual meeting of the Birmingham Group at the Pitman Hotel on December the 8th, Mr. Francis Blizard read a very thoughtful paper on "Appreciation," in which he referred to the necessity of appreciating the work of others, although it might differ greatly from ours, of putting aside censure, dislike, and prejudice, and so enabling oneself to see that which is good and valuable in others, instead of cramping one's soul by narrowness, selfishness, and apathy.

A short paper was also read by Mr. J. S. Akehurst.

The Secretary of this Group (which meets on the second Tuesday in each month, and not, as stated in our last issue, on the first Tuesday), is Mr. Francis S. Blizard, 213, Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, to whom those wishing to join may apply.

Mr. Akehurst conducted the meeting on January the 12th, and dealt with the direction and control of one's

thought-forces, and the scientific laws governing the same. Three additional members were enrolled.

At the meeting of the West London Group on December the 15th, Mrs. Chase read an excellent paper on "Attitude," in which she elucidated the right attitude of mind to be adopted towards evil. In the conversation which followed, faith and self-reliance were discussed.

On January the 9th, Mr. Harry Stone read a very excellent paper to the members of the North London Group. The Secretary requested all the members to come to the February meeting prepared with practical suggestions for the future work of the circle.

The Liverpool, Birmingham, and two London Groups have all decided to meet monthly.

A Group is formed in Newcastle-on-Tyne.

THE EDITOR'S VISIT TO LONDON.

THE Editor's proposed visit to London will take place on February the 18th, when he will address the combined Groups of London and district, and other readers of THE LIGHT OF REASON, at the New Food Reform Restaurant, 4, Farnival Street, E.C., at 8.15 P.M. He also invites his readers to dine with him at the above place at 6.30 on the same evening. As only a limited number of tickets can be issued, the Editor will be glad to hear early from all those who would like to accept this invitation. Applications for tickets must be made direct to the Editor, and must reach him not later than the 10th inst. His address is—Broad Park Avenue, Ilfracombe. The dinner will be an informal one. Those who cannot be present at the dinner will be welcome at the after-meeting.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

Essays and Letters, by Leo Tolstoy, and translated by Aylmer Maude, is one of "The World's Classics" Series published by Grant Richards, Leicester Square, London, at 1s. It claims to be "The best and cheapest volume of Tolstoy's Essays that has appeared in this country." It contains twenty-six of Tolstoy's articles, and there are over 370 pages of closely printed matter.

Concerning Human Carnivorism, by the Rev. J. Todd Ferric; published by The Order of the Golden Age, Paignton; cloth bound, price 1s. 6d. net. Of the many works published on the subject of Vegetarianism, this is one of the best we have seen. It does not approach the subject from a gustatory point of view, but deals with it almost exclusively from the ethical side. In support of his arguments the author refers to the dietetic practices of the early Christian Fathers, and quotes from their writings. He also quotes the statements of eminent scientists on the matter. The book will prove valuable to those who are prepared to discipline themselves in the matter of diet.

The Jewel and its Casket, by George Black, M.B., Edin., Torquay, price 3d. This is an admirably written pamphlet on the subject of Food Reform. The writer is apt and happy in his frequent employment of similes, and the subject-matter is interspersed with interesting anecdotes. He advises a non-flesh dietary both from the ethical and physiological standpoints. As a medical man of wide experience, his statements are worthy of notice.

Life, by Augusta Webster, published by Francis Riddell Henderson, 26, Paternoster Square, London, price 3d. net. There are beautiful thoughts, poetically expressed, on nearly every page of this booklet, which consists of three addresses given at "The Higher Thought Centre." The book deals with self-command and with the power of thought in everyday life, and puts some simple ethical interpretations into words which are generally associated with mysticism.

Out of the Heart, by R. Dimsdale Stocker, price 3d.; published by C. W. Daniel, 5, Water Lane, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C. Those of our readers who admire

the poems of Mr. Stocker, which have appeared in *THE LIGHT OF REASON*, will doubtless be pleased to have this neat little booklet of poems. Most of the pieces which we have published are here reprinted, while some of them are quite new. There is also inserted the prose article, "Man's Potential Perfection," which originally appeared in *THE LIGHT OF REASON*, and at the end of the book there are two pages of short axiomatic sentences.

Emmanuel Swedenborg, and *George Fox* are two threepenny booklets by W. P. Swainson, and published by C. W. Daniel. They are Nos. 2 and 3 of the "Christian Mystics." The author enters thoroughly into his subject and manifests a deep insight into the character and mission of the men of whom he writes, and the booklets are well worthy a serious study.

The Promise of Life, or Revelation of Conditional Immortality, by J. F. B. Tingling, M.A., and published by Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row, London, is, as its sub-title implies, a work in support of the doctrine of conditional immortality.

Christ in the Heart, by Mrs. Atkey, published by Elliot Stock, price 3d. The author of "My Change of Mind" has given, in this booklet, help and guidance for those who have not yet found the indwelling Comforter. She has embodied in the little book quotations from George Fox, Madame Guyon, Johann Scheffer, Bishop Hall, and others.

An Emerson Treasury, selected by Albert Broadbent, price 3d., published by Thomas Burleigh, London. Compiler and printer have both done their work well in this, the last, and best, addition to Mr. Broadbent's "Treasury" Series. The very pith of Emersonian thought is here aptly and systematically arranged under various and suitable headings, including a few of Emerson's best poems. The "Foreword," written by Thomas Pole, is a delightful little essay on Emerson, which concludes with the following prophetic words:— "If Emerson is not the most potent intellectual force of the New World, he seems to me to be the embodiment of its idealism, and the quickener of that spiritual renaissance which to observant eyes is seen to be awakening East and West."

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