

**LIGHT ON CURRENT
TOPICS, BENNETT
LECTURES FOR 1895**

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Light on Current Topics, Bennett Lectures for 1895 by Various

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VARIOUS

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BENNETT LECTURES FOR 1895

BOSTON:
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1895
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The Gift

the Reverend ... of New Church Literature.

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PREFACE.

THE following chapters were originally in the form of lectures delivered in Boston early in the year 1895. With the exception of the first — which forms the Introduction and has been greatly abbreviated in order to avoid needless repetitions — they are here printed substantially as they were delivered. Pecuniary means for procuring and publishing them were afforded by a bequest of the late Mrs. Eleanor Bennett, an esteemed member of the Boston Society of the New Jerusalem, who left to the society a perpetual fund, the annual interest of which must be “devoted and expended for such books, publications, and for such other purposes as the trustees to be appointed by said society shall from time to time see fit to direct in the promulgation of the doctrines of the Swedenborgian, or New Church, so called.”

It was thought by those having charge of this fund that no better use could be made of the income for the time being than to provide for a course of lectures, with the purpose of setting forth the teaching of the New Church on a few topics of living interest. In pursuance of this plan, certain subjects

were selected, and writers invited to prepare papers upon them. No other object was considered, in the choice of topics, than the answering of questions on which light was really needed. In the choice of lecturers also, the only thought was to ensure honest and dispassionate treatment, without personal bias or prejudice. The one request made of each was that he would make a thorough study of his subject, and of the doctrines of the New Church in relation thereto. The lectures, as delivered, gave much satisfaction. It remains to be seen how far their influence will be extended by means of the printed volume.

J. R.

CONTENTS

	PAGE.
INTRODUCTION. <i>James Reed.</i>	I
THEOSOPHY AND RELIGION. <i>Frank Sewall.</i>	13
THE RIGHT AND EXERCISE OF OWNERSHIP. <i>Julian K. Smyth.</i>	63
THE DIVINE LAW OF USE AND ITS APPLICATION TO INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS. <i>Albert Mason.</i>	94
THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE STATE AND TO SECULAR AFFAIRS. <i>Samuel S. Seward.</i>	118
PAUPERISM AND CRIME. <i>Theodore F. Wright.</i>	148
NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH. <i>James Reed.</i>	174

27

27

27

27

27

27

27

27

27

27

27

LIGHT ON CURRENT TOPICS

INTRODUCTION

JAMES REED

It is a trite remark that we are living in a new age of the world, in which the lives and thoughts of men are undergoing a remarkable change. This statement is one which no man would think of denying. It is universally understood that during the nineteenth century, now nearing its close, a wonderful step forward has been taken in the march of human progress. The civilization of today is not that of a hundred years ago. Conditions which were then unknown, are now deemed indispensable to human happiness. To dwell upon the mechanical inventions and improvements of this age, would be the rehearsal of a threadbare subject; and yet it is a matter on which we never cease to congratulate ourselves. Perhaps we are a little proud of our railways and steamships, our telegraphs and telephones, our power-presses, looms,