

THE RELIGION OF DUTY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649169368

The religion of duty by Felix Adler

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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FELIX ADLER

**THE RELIGION
OF DUTY**

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BY

FELIX ADLER

*Author of Life and Destiny
and Marriage and Divorce*



NEW YORK
McCLURE, PHILLIPS & CO.
MCMV



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Published, May, 1905 N

Second Impression

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

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THERE has been a growing demand on the part of many people interested in the ethical and religious problems of the age, for a book by Professor Adler, giving the results of his thought and practical work along these lines. To gratify this demand has, naturally, been a wish on Professor Adler's part; but his exacting labours as Leader of the Society for Ethical Culture of New York City, and his interest in the constantly enlarging international fellowship of Ethical Societies, together with his work as a university professor, and the no less exacting service of the various public causes which have challenged his efforts, have rendered impossible the needed leisure in which to formulate his thought and give it appropriate literary expression. Through the past twenty-eight years, however, Professor Adler has been speaking regularly to the large audiences which have gathered on Sundays to listen to his teachings; and, fortunately, these public utterances, while de-

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livered extemporaneously, have been faithfully recorded by capable stenographers, whose reports afford a large revelation of his best thought through these years.

In the absence of a more carefully prepared volume, it has seemed that to draw upon these spoken addresses for some expression of the principles which are most central in Professor Adler's thought, and to place them within the reach of the many people who desire to know more fully the conclusions of this earnest moral leader, would be a real service to the ethical and religious interests of the present time.

Some of the material which goes to form the present volume has been published in *Ethical Addresses* and *The Ethical Record*; but the larger part is here published for the first time, while that which is republished has been more carefully edited and arranged with a view to giving the sequence necessary for any adequate understanding of the point of view and the resulting conclusions.

It is hoped that in the near future another volume may be published, presenting the more practical aspects of Professor Adler's work along the line of social ethics, as the present volume gives the distinctively theoretical phases of his thought.

The work of the editor of this volume has been mainly that of eliminating those features of the spoken

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address which would be out of place in print, and of arranging addresses delivered in various years in such a manner as to give continuity and organic sequence to the thought implied in the title of this volume. Some element of repetition is inevitable in such a compilation, but care has been exercised to eliminate all repetitions not absolutely needed to make clear the context of the several chapters. The opinions of this work, even though it has been prepared without his personal supervision, may safely be regarded as entirely those of Professor Adler; and the expression is, in the main, his, with only such modification as seemed necessary in converting speech into print.

The task of editing has been one of pleasure, and has been performed with a feeling that to put into the hands of earnest people these words of one who has proved a leader to many, will be to extend an influence which may contribute to the progress of the higher life.

LESLIE WILLIS SPRAGUE