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OR,

First Causes of Character,

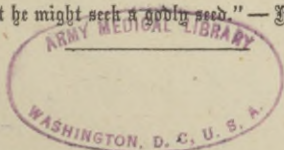
AS OPERATIVE BEFORE BIRTH, FROM HEREDITARY AND
SPIRITUAL SOURCES

BEING A TREATISE ON THE ORGANIC STRUCTURE AND QUALITY OF
THE HUMAN SOUL, AS DETERMINED BY PRE-NATAL CON-
DITIONS IN THE PARENTAGE AND ANCESTRY,
AND HOW FAR WE CAN DIRECT AND
CONTROL THEM.

BY WOODBURY M. FERNALD,

Author of "God in his Providence," "Compendium and Life of
Swedenborg," etc.

"That he might seek a godly seed." — Mal. ii. 15.



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TO
ALL THE MARRIED,

BUT PARTICULARLY TO

Those who contemplate entering that Holy Union,

This Little Treatise

IS RELIGIOUSLY INSCRIBED.

MAY 26 1945

PREFACE.

“IN the biography of eminent men, great care has generally been taken to show at what school or college they were educated, under what able professor, and the particular course of study pursued. Yet how unimportant are these facts, when we reflect that a vast number of men, of only common capacities, pass through the same college, under the same able professors, and pursue the same course of study, without having been raised above mediocrity? The inference then is, that the biographer must go farther back than education, to elicit the true cause which produced this pre-eminence in the subject of his memoir. And to what glorious results might not such inquiry lead—probably to the important result of the mental and physical improvement of the whole human race. *And he who can establish the practicability of such improvement, will have bestowed upon the world the choicest legacy ever bequeathed to humanity.*” *

In regard to the phrase, “Moral and Intellectual Qualities Transmissible,” it has been objected by some, that it is not strictly true. It is not the very, identical, actual character of the man, that is transmissible to his children, but *proclivities* to that same character. We acknowledge a degree of truth in this: at the same time, it is such proclivity as, to a degree, inevitably insures the character, and may be said to be, perhaps, more strictly, the natural ground or foundation upon which a man builds his own more personal and spiritual character, and into which is inseminated the finer and higher essen-

* Intellectual and Moral Qualities Transmissible. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1843.

ces. It amounts, therefore, to the same thing in effect, whether we say qualities or proclivities transmissible. The result to the character is similar, for, in a certain sense, qualities are *in* proclivities, and proclivities in qualities.

“The life and happiness of individuals, the love and harmony of families, the prosperity and stability of States and Kingdoms, and the protection of life, liberty, and person, are more dependent on influences that bear upon human beings, before birth, than on any influence that can be brought to bear on them afterwards. What is *organized* into us, in our pre-natal state, is of more consequence to us, and more vital to our triumph over the temptations and obstacles that impede our progress towards perfection and happiness, than what is *educated* into us after we are born.”*

“We are physiologically connected and set forth in our beginnings; and it is a matter of immense consequence to our character, what the connection is. In our birth, we not only begin to breathe, and circulate blood, but it is a question hugely significant, whose the blood may be. For in this we have whole rivers of predispositions, good or bad, set running in us—as much more powerful to shape our future than all tuitional and regulative influences that come after, as they are earlier in their beginning, deeper in their insertion, and more constant in their operation.”†

“He who can convince the world of the importance of the laws of hereditary descent, and induce mankind to conduct themselves accordingly, will do more good to them, and contribute more to their improvement, than all institutions and all systems of education.”‡

The great problem of our day is, *how to produce* the best original forms of humanity, for this world and the next.

W. M. F.

* Henry C. Wright.

† Dr. Horace Bushnell.

‡ Spurzheim.

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FIRST CAUSES OF CHARACTER.

I.

THE SOUL AS AN ORGANIC STRUCTURE.

THAT the human soul is an organized structure is a truth which we must assume, for the most part, as a foregone conclusion with the reader, or one likely to be reached by him in the progress of his thought. For there can be no evidence of an exclusively scientific or rational nature so convincing as the testimony of the Seers and of the Scriptures ; and where this fails, the analogies and considerations which might be offered are comparatively feeble and insufficient to one who is disposed to doubt or deny it. We think, however, that among the thoughtful at the present day, its truth is generally admitted. For no one who thinks at all worthily can think of the soul as utterly formless: if it is any thing, it must be a

substance of some kind; and if a substance, it must have form; and if any form at all, — if any thing but a mere conglomerate chaos, — why not the *human* form, which is the universal testimony of the Seers and of the Scriptures? Why not a completely organized spiritual structure, — man in all his plenitude of internal, immortal powers?

But it matters not to the practical conclusions of our subject, whether we think of the soul as distinctly organized or not, as the body is, so be it that we give it some form, or some substantial existence as an entity within the physical organism, and which came there by some law or process of nature, which has a definite quality and character according to its antecedents, and which has also a most wonderful sympathy with the body, showing a connection at once vital, profound, and interesting.

Let us pass here, briefly, upon the common, or rather, the scholastic definition of spirit. It would seem to be sufficient for its own refutation. Spirit, we are told in the language of the schools, is a substance without form, parts, divisibility, color, extension, or any of the properties of matter. What is this but a mockery to the human under-

standing? For, if spirit be any substance at all, form or shape of some kind is inevitable: and so, we should infer, of parts, color, and indeed all the qualities that are usually attributed to matter, in a higher and more refined degree. We cannot, indeed, weigh it, and measure it, and analyze it, by the scales and rules and chemistry of this world; but in its own proper world, I make no doubt, it can be tested in many ways perfectly correspondent to its grosser counterpart in this world of matter.

In short, this attempt to define and refine spiritual nature into nothing, must be repudiated ere we can advance a single step, rationally, into the truth and reality of spiritual things. We make no pretensions to absolute verity, nor would we dogmatize at all on so high a subject; but we confess our strong partiality for the theory of one only eternal substance, out of which all things have been unfolded, visible and invisible. And the mind of man, as far as we can express it in a brief psychological formula, is the positive and negative motion, complex play, action and re-action, of the most highly refined and organized substance. Or in other words, spirit and matter are the two ex-

tremes of one only substance. Not that spirit is a refinement of matter, as is sometimes crudely said, nor that matter is gross and material spirit; but that one is discreted and separated from the other by a process which leaves them both different substances, yet as originally one. The subject is somewhat unappreciable to minds not familiarized with it; but all we can say here is, for it is not really essential to our main theme, that God has probably created matter from Himself, not continuously, or so that it is still a part of Him after it is separated from Him; but discretely, to use the philosophical term, or so that, though it is produced from Him, it is then no longer divine, but natural, finite, and material. And the process must be considered as from eternity to eternity, and not as diminishing the infinite by quantity. If any should choose to say that matter was the *precipitate* of spirit, it would not be far from the truth, though the whole doctrine of this most elusive and controverted subject is probably to be found, as nearly as it can be anywhere, in Swedenborg's distinction between "discrete" and "continuous" degrees, to which we must refer the reader.

But to eschew all theorizing which is in any

manner doubtful or questionable, and to confine ourselves within strictly truthful and practical limits, we only ask the admission of substance and form to the soul, which none can deny without involvement in the grossest absurdity. But if we can add to this the following simple statement of the Seer just quoted, then is the groundwork of our subject open, manifest, and clear. The soul or spirit of man, he says, is "the *interior man*, for it appears there altogether as a man, with all the members and organs that man has, and it is also *the man himself in the body*. That this is the case may also be manifest from the angels seen, as recorded in the Word, who were all seen in the human form."

Let us now attend somewhat to the physical and psychical conditions under which this form is manifest, and by which it is really made existent in the world. Clergymen of a certain class, and others of their stamp, are accustomed to treat the human soul, which they crudely contemplate as a formless substance, without considering its physical and psychical conditions, and its intimate union and sympathy with the body. And the immense amount of good which is done by these merely

moral and spiritual appeals, and the intellectual influence which is thus brought to bear upon humanity, we do not wish to overlook or disparage. But the question we have to ask is, how does this influence take effect? To what are these appeals addressed, and how do they operate? And here the fact comes up to us in all its gigantic importance, of the *organic condition* of this mass of humanity, in its psychical and physical relations. When great conversions are made, when multitudes are aroused from apathy and indifference, when bad men become suddenly good men (but mark from *how* bad to *how* good they suddenly become), the influence so wrought is always upon those brains and spirits which stood before most susceptible to these influences, by their good physiological and spiritual conditions. I know that there are apparent exceptions to this remark. I know that sometimes extremely bad men—persons quite gone in sensuality and degradation (as in the case of any great revival of religion,—that wide-spread, deep excitement in Ireland, for instance), are among the first to become the subjects of these spiritual influences, while many more moral and externally respectable men es-

cape. But to say nothing of the causes which are beyond the notice of our eye, and the means in the spiritual world which for certain reasons may be made operative and efficient upon them, while they cannot so well upon others *to us* more promising, be it observed that this does not invalidate the position in the least, that *some* conditions, *some* preparations, in the physical and spiritual brain, are necessary to the production of any effect at all. If a man had *no* brain and heart, I fancy he could not be converted. By parity of reasoning, the better his natural soul is, the more *easily* can he be converted. For there is no absolutely "irresistible" or unconditional grace in the matter. Therefore, all other circumstances and conditions being equal, here and in the spiritual world (both worlds being so intimately connected), those come most easily under the power of moral and spiritual appeals, whose physical and spiritual organisms are most suitably prepared. It is a work *wholly* grounded in organic relations of some kind. The very heavens are organized; each angel has his own peculiar brain and body; God himself must have, infinitely speaking, an organic existence; and the Holy Spirit, when it sweeps through the

hearts of men, has its own laws, is limited by its own receptacles, and makes the music or the discord of humanity according to the substantial materials over which and through which its divine breath circulates.

Many remain in negligence and criminality from their circumstances in social life, position, habit, or education; but still so well organized and attuned as only to wait the influence of powerful appeal, clear knowledge, and realization, to turn them from wickedness to virtue. What, then, is the *first*, or proximate cause, of their conversion and change? Fine physical and psychological conditions, including the entire spiritual organism itself, without which, in some degree, all the eloquence of the pulpit, and the thunders and splendors of eternity, could not awake them from their moral torpor. If this is not true, let the pulpit try its influences upon those hard and intractable specimens of human nature to be found in our State Prisons,—whose brains, internally and externally, spiritually and physically, are notched and angularized by the ancestral discord of many generations, and, with their bodies, shorn of all beautiful and moral proportions. Of course,

something can be done, but little comparatively. Now, if this is true in extreme cases, it is true in principle: and we only need to make the proper discriminations in degree, to announce, as the foundations of all human excellence, those nice organic conditions of matter and spirit, which are as capable of being shaped and moulded by human art and science, as the clay in the hands of the potter.

And, therefore, antecedently to the work of re-formation, we need, most radically, formation. More than reformers we need formers. At least in a future age we shall. It is comparatively a hard work to re-cast and re-form the discordant materials which have received their mis-shapen birth and fixity by the influence of a thousand generations. But to form — to create anew, with the original proportions of beauty and perfection, is the most important, as it may be the easiest work. And the problem is, *how to produce* the best original forms of humanity, for this world and the next? For it should be observed that this subject is so important, that not only time, but eternity, is involved in its far-reaching consequences. The human soul receives its impress — its style — its

distinguishing characteristics, which it must bear through all eternity, *before its birth* into this incipient world. Its discords may eventually be outgrown, or destroyed; but never the distinctive fashion of the man: and even the discords, we have reason to know, are not only perpetuated all through this life, but deeply and sadly into that life which is to come. No subject, then, can claim superiority to this.

II.

INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL QUALITIES TRANSMISSIBLE FROM PARENTS TO CHILDREN.

WE are here brought to the consideration of the law of hereditary transmission of qualities. Every one knows that *physical* peculiarities are transmitted from family to family. The form of the face, the figure, the temperament, and many striking particulars, are frequently alike in parents and children. The disposition to various disorders, as scrofula, consumption, dropsy, gout, epilepsy, deafness, insanity, &c., is frequently the inheritance of birth. Sometimes also anomalies and deformities can be thus traced; as of a family mentioned by Sir Anthony Carlisle, in which were supernumerary toes and fingers for four generations. They were introduced by a female who had six fingers on each hand, and six toes on each foot. Now, if physical qualities and disorders are governed by this law of hereditary descent, it

would seem a ready inference that mental and moral qualities must be, for these latter are only able to manifest themselves through the physical organism. And it is proved that certain peculiarities of physical organism are necessary to the corresponding peculiarities of spiritual character. In fact, the spirit itself, being in general a perfect counterpart and analogue of the body, owns the sovereignty of similar laws. And family resemblances are quite as common in minds as in bodies. The only ground of objection to the universality of this law is in those apparent exceptions which sometimes occur, as where parents of superior talents and virtue often have children of an inferior nature, and where, in many families, there are individuals of very different and even opposite capacities. But it should be remembered that where there is only *one* superior parent, married to a partner of inferior conditions, the qualities of the offspring must be uncertain. It is a common observation that boys resemble their mother, and girls their father; and that men of great talents almost always descend from intelligent mothers. This last remark, however, must be taken with many grains of allowance. Still, there is so much

truth in it — there are so many instances of great and commanding geniuses, both in the moral and intellectual world, whose distinction can be traced in an open and direct way, more or less, to a superiority of maternal descent, — of which may be mentioned, Bacon, Bonaparte, Milton, Goethe, Cuvier, Edwards, Washington, Sir William Jones, John Wesley, and a host of others,* that we are inclined to bestow a few moments' notice upon it, as also upon a most remarkable statement of an apparently opposite character, put forth by Emanuel Swedenborg, that the *soul* only is from the father, and the *body* from the mother! "The soul, which is from the father, is the very man; and the body, which is from the mother, is not man in itself, but from the soul." *True Christian Religion*, No. 103. The statement is also repeated in his work on *Conjugal Love*, 206, where it is represented that the soul receives its *clothing* only from the mother, analogous to seeds cast into the ground, and receiving a body from nature. The assertion is also fortified by a reference to a gen-

* See, for an illustration of the parentage of these men, an excellent little work entitled "Intellectual and Moral Qualities Transmissible:" referred to in the preface.

eral image of the father's face in each descendant, when in just series; or if not in the immediate parentage, in the more remote; and by the fact that nations are known from their first father. "For, there is in the seed of every one, from which he is conceived, a graft or offset of the father's soul, in its fulness, within a certain covering from the elements of nature, by which the body is formed in the womb of the mother." And since this statement is fundamental, also, to the author's theology—his doctrine of the incarnation of our Lord, and his miraculous conception in the womb of the Virgin, it is evidently made with great care. Moreover, from the character of Swedenborg as a Seer as well as a Philosopher, and his well-sustained reputation, we are satisfied it is not made without some substantial reason, or truth founded in absolute science. But whether it has been well understood by all his followers, or whether he or his translators have not used the term "body," with reference to the mother, in a loose and unaccustomed sense,—these are the questions. Certainly, so acute and able a mind as that of the Swedish Seer and philosopher could not have meant that the *fleshly, material* body was all that

the mother contributed of her nature to the child ! What infatuated stupidity this would be ! And how it is contradicted by the noble line of brilliant and superior men and women whose distinction can be directly traced to the superiority of the maternal parentage ! What then could he mean ? In reply, it must be observed, that the phraseology of Swedenborg is in many instances peculiar. And in the use of the term "soul," he sometimes, and perhaps oftenest, uses it to express the *whole* soul, or what we commonly mean by the immortal part ; and sometimes, when he means to be more metaphysically exact, he uses the word as expressive only of the *inmost* or *supremest* part of man — that spiritual degree of his nature which is above consciousness. As in his treatise on Influx, No. 8, he says, "The human soul, as being the superior spiritual substance in man, receives its influx immediately from God ; the mind, as an inferior spiritual substance, receives its influx from God mediately through the spiritual world." Here is a plain difference between the soul, in its inmost degree, and the mind, with its affections and thoughts. The mind is considered as something lower, or more external. Now, it must have

been in this latter sense, in which he speaks of the "clothing" of the soul as conferred by the mother. And although he uses the term "body" with regard to it, yet it must be remembered that Swedenborg always speaks of spiritual things as existing in form and organism, and he even explicitly says that the soul in the other life "retains a kind of border, [or circumambient accretion] from the *purest things of nature*, around it." The body, then, which is from the mother, in Swedenborg's sense, must have been the spiritual body, or clothing of the inmost soul, in connection also with the fleshly body of nature. In no other sense could he, otherwise than most stupidly, say that the body *only* is derived from the mother. And the *soul* which the mother communicates, as may be inferred even from him, is the comparatively external soul, or mind, not the inmost supreme ens, and this is what we believe. And this is the very truth which we wish to suggest as the reason why, after all, too much stress must not be put upon the proverbial saying that great men have generally had remarkable or distinguished mothers. Frequently they may have had, but this could be from that decided, potent, psychical na-

ture, or mind, which the mother communicates, and which plays so distinguished a part in the world. But at the same time, that inmost and supremest ens which the father communicates, it is not hers to give, for this is communicated by the seed, which is in the father; and it is for the mother only to clothe and organize that germ for external action; and this is the reason why, after all is said, man is universally recognized as predominant in power and influence, in *some* sense to which woman in vain aspires. Yet still, in a true order of things, the part which the woman contributes to organic life and character is *equal in importance* to that which man communicates, only differently placed: and therefore, with a true philosophy, there need be no detraction from her high prerogatives. We see her unjust oppression; we acknowledge the superiority of her love and refinement, and her beautiful and brilliant intellect; we know that in a perfectly true union she would be the equal of man, as God designed her, but no more; and we labor gladly, triumphantly, for her elevation. There is a new day for her to come.

But we must not protract this discussion here.

We may just state now, as our own modest opinion, that it is not superior mothers, pre-eminently, that we need for the origin of great men, but the excellence of *both* parents, in their united organisms, temperaments, and influence: for when either is lacking, the other is comparatively weak in productive effort. Sometimes it is of the mother, sometimes of the father, that illustrious progeny proceeds; but the truth unquestionably is, that were all operative causes taken into consideration, it would be found that nature is uniform in her processes, and that neither the one nor the other could boast of any predominance other than that of an impartial, beautiful order in all that God has designed. "One of the great causes why men of talents frequently leave no gifted posterity, is, that they form alliances with women of low temperament, in whose inert systems their vivacity is extinguished; and, on the other hand, the cause why men of genius often descend from fathers in whom no trace of ethereal qualities can be discovered, is, that these men were the fortunate husbands of women of high temperament, and fine cerebral combinations, who transmitted these qualities to their offspring."

Since writing the above, we have received a letter from a critical friend and admirer of Swedenborg, confirmatory of these views, in answer to a question put to him respecting the point in question. His reply is—"What Swedenborg means by the body only being from the mother, I do not know, for I am neither his expositor nor apologist: but what I should mean is, that the sensual mind, as well as the first corporeal substances, are sympathetically moulded by her during pregnancy and in the first age of childhood; but when both parents are truly united, they continually so act upon each other, that it would be difficult to say which most influenced the character. That our best and greatest men trace their qualities to their mothers is because a mother's influence is more seen and felt; and when her love is reciprocated by the child, it cannot fail to develop, nurture, and strengthen his noblest points of character."

In the case of any other differences in the same family, which the above considerations are insufficient to account for, there are, doubtless, supernatural causes which operate—means and appliances, I mean, in the spiritual world, by which, when a genius of particular character is wanted—

a great commander, mathematician, poet, philosopher, reformer, or some other personage, the angels themselves, who are only glorified men and women, conspire to operate upon the original germ, and so far as the laws reigning will admit, produce the character that the world needs. It would be difficult to account for the timely and providential appearance of certain great leaders — such as meet great crises, and affect large periods of history, if there are *not* in operation some such supernatural means. Spiritual beings have much more to do with births, even ordinary births, and the whole pre-natal condition from the moment of conception, than we are aware of. They not only arrange, when they can, for the suitable parties who shall, under providence, become the parents of a particular child, but (taking the testimony of the Seers, Swedenborg in particular, with our own reason) they preside continually over the womb that contains so precious a treasure, and, by a course of direct and subtle operation, they ward off all hostile influences, and, by nourishment and protection, minister to the unborn infant in a thousand unknown and secret ways, to prepare it for its future mission. In this way, frequently, even all heredi-

tary laws seem to be set at defiance, and the greatest possible unlikeness between the child and the parent is secured by a higher power.

“Generation is so holy that there is present a direct influx from Almighty God, upon all orderly earths, in the celebration of the nuptial mysteries; and there is a special series of vortices, by means of which these first essences of mankind become deposited in their resting-places. The Angels of the Ultimate Heaven preside over this, and, when the germ becomes ultimated, they are guardians each of that child over the descent of whose germ they have mediated.”*

There is undoubtedly an inverted truth connected also with the miscalled science of Astrology. The groupings of the suns and planets in the universe, and the subtle auras emanating from them, may be supposed to have some influence over the susceptible embryotic life, as we know that they do upon the earth's atmosphere, causing many perceptible changes. Speaking of certain great and influential men, as of Cromwell, Frederic the Great of Prussia, &c., and of particular convergent influences in the heavens, it is remarked

* *Arcana of Christianity*, by T. L. Harris, No. 522.

by the author just quoted, that "when God wills to raise up a hero for the deliverance of any people of our earth, or for any great transition period, a mother is selected, and a father, of suitable organic life, and the initiation of the germ into the womb is effected when such suns as these are ascendant in the centre of influence." 502. We do not vouch for this, neither do we slightly disregard it, being well aware that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

But to leave, for the present, the higher and supernatural influences, let us remark here upon the thousand influences and conditions of a purely natural character, attending both parents through the whole continuance of the pro-creative term, and particularly the period of gestation. How slight a circumstance will change the whole character and fortune of the child! The laws of sympathy, impression, outward circumstance and inward state—how marvellously they operate! Bonaparte awoke to conscious existence amidst the civil wars and commotions of his own native Corsica; and his mother, the wife of a military chieftain, was often on horseback in the thickest of the strife. It has been remarked generally, of the children whose ex-

istence dated from the horrors of the first French Revolution, that "they turned out to be weak, nervous, and irritable of mind, extremely susceptible of impressions, and liable to be thrown by the least extraordinary excitement into absolute insanity." And in common life, in thousands of well-known cases, who is not familiar with the influence of parental impressions prior to birth, both on the physical and mental constitution of the child?

Now, here is the law — here is the place, time, occasion, which, in connection with other influences to be mentioned afterwards, is rife with more important consequences to humanity and all true reform, than all other causes, frequently, in a whole lifetime. Education and regeneration may do much after this, but little comparatively without this, even in their most successful efforts. And we shall see, in the sequel, how much regeneration is connected with this.

Let us look at this a little more in particular. We are very apt to say we can do but little here, people are so faithless, and so sensual and worldly. But the truth is, we do not know what we can do till knowledge is made patent and tangible before us, and till, considering the desolations and cor-

ruptions of humanity through all its relations, we begin in some sense to despair of it, and to ask if some more radical and effective measures may not be instituted for its redemption. Let us, then, if possible, venture upon the most radical grounds. And let us put off the shoes from our feet, for the ground is holy.

III.

FACTS OF TRANSMISSION, AND HOW FAR WE CAN
CONTROL THEM.

THE facts on this subject range all the way, from the most hopeless idiocy, to the most beautiful and marked developments of virtue, intellect, and human joy. We would that we could present a greater array of them, but our limits, and the requirements of the subject, must make the following sufficient. By these, the *principle* of all we have to say is permanently and prominently established.

For a case of the most melancholy character, take that recorded by Dr. Combe, in his "Constitution of Man." — "The child's father belonged to a regiment then in Ireland. He had obtained leave of absence to join his relations in England, and on the eve of his departure to join his regiment again, an evening entertainment was given, at which the daughter of an elderly woman was

present, and she and the soldier danced and sang together the whole evening. While thus heated by the toddy and the dance, they left the cottage, and after the lapse of an hour were found together in a glen, in a state of utter insensibility, from the effects of the former festivity. The consequence of this interview was the birth of an idiot. He is now [says the narrator] nearly six years of age, and his mother does not believe he is able to recognize either herself or any other individual. He is quite incapable of making signs, whereby his wants can be made known — with this exception, that when hungry he gives a wild shriek. The parents are both intelligent, and the fatal result cannot be otherwise accounted for than by the almost total prostration or eclipse of the intellect of *both parties* from intoxication.”

The above case is one from which we may generalize. If such is the result of an extreme debasement of both father and mother, what follows but that in all the lesser and minute derelictions from the law of strict rectitude, — in all those nameless variations of the conditions of human life and activity, the results to the offspring are none the less sure and exact, though we are not able

to trace them? Does it not show the mighty and omnipotent sway of the parentage — of the states of the affections, the thoughts, the superinducing elements which enter into and form the infant organism even at the time of conception? If this is an extreme case, let it speak to us all the more powerfully* of how the *whole* nature — the whole soul, may be affected and over-borne by a pre-natal condition in the parentage, and this even before the quickening of conception in the womb of the mother. It is melancholy indeed; but so much do human beings, with their fearful agency, have to do with extinguishing the very first spark of the life of God in the soul of man, and dragging down all that is heavenly and immortal into hopeless and utter darkness.

On the contrary, what may not an entirely opposite condition effect — those high, saintly, and exalted states, such as all should strive after, and a few attain to, in the inestimable privilege of earthly parentage? What wonders of generation may not be effected by compliance with the eternal and inevitable laws! “In conversation on this subject with a distinguished Judge,” says O. S. Fowler, in his ‘Love and Parentage,’ “he said he

employed the principle here involved in regard to his youngest child." That is, like a sensible man, he made a practical application of it. "Determined, at the end of several sessions, to dismiss business, and recreate a while with his family, he invited several of his legal and other intimate friends to accompany him for the purpose of having a delightful festive occasion. Meanwhile, his wife had ordered out the carriage, and came to escort him home. All entered, heart and soul, into the dance, mirth, and music of the occasion. In the exceedingly agreeable frame of the minds of its parents thus induced, the child received existence and character, [was conceived] and accordingly, rarely cries, frets, or complains, but will sit on the floor for hours together, and amuse herself, always appears perfectly happy, and is one of the best-natured children in the world."

From this we may learn the importance of providing every cheerful circumstance — all that can destroy melancholy, give buoyancy of spirits and suitable elevation of mind to the young being who is so soon to be ushered into the world, and whose happiness or misery can be largely promoted by a wise precaution on the part of the parents, before

the period of conception, at the time of it, and during the whole progress of gestation. It should be remembered that it is the period between conception and birth, that is the most decisive in regard to the natural character of the child, and during which more can be done for it than frequently a whole education amounts to, in shaping and defining its earthly destiny. The exceptions, of course, are here taken of the providential means which are furnished in the ancestry, and in the character of the immediate parentage before conception; but for shaping, impressing, and moulding what is given, the period above denoted is frequently the most important. It may be made much more so. No mere education, after birth, can equal what is here effected, and organized into our very being. It becomes us, therefore, to take due notice of a time so fruitful of consequences, and conform our action accordingly.

Another interesting case which may be mentioned, is that of a boy whose parents I am personally acquainted with. They had lost a precious and favorite child of most remarkable promise, distinguished for its beauty and its noble organism, its fine brain and temperament, and sweetness of

disposition. It was the admired of every beholder. He died at the age of twenty months. Profoundly pained at this instance of bereavement, yet bearing it with a Christian and philosophic fortitude which few could summon, it was now, after two years, their hearts' desire, their religious determination, and their *systematic effort*, to supply the breach in the family which this death had occasioned. Accordingly, they *prepared* themselves for the purpose, as every parent should. For several weeks previous to conception, with the father in particular, who understood this matter, it was his thought, his prayer, his noble aspiration, to obtain from the Creator a child to replace the one they had lost. And by inducing a proper state of mind in himself, he thus sought to impregnate the germ of a new being. It was the good fortune of these parents too, to know of the nearness of the angelic world, and the sympathy which the heavenly beings have for the offspring of earth. And in the holiest and purest consecration of themselves to the hymeneal act, who shall say that the Divinity would not honor it, and crown it with his especial blessing? It was by this process that the very seed of the father, and the first germ of life

in the embryo with the mother, were magnetized or spiritualized with a divine force and substance, by the predominating affections, thoughts, will, and effort of both parents; and through their organism, first in the spiritual, and then in the natural or material, the vitalizing properties of a new being were transmitted and fixed in the original form! Behold the result! Not an angel, for there are no angels in this world; but a child of *love*, not of *lust*, was produced;—an ethereal, beneficent, heavenly principle was conveyed to the mother;—the Christ principle;—not as He had it, but as we may have it, and by which our households may be blessed with angelic natures, and the whole world greatly reformed and redeemed. The child so born to these parents was remarkable for sweetness of disposition, for beautiful intellect, for a fine, impressible temperament, and this too in a family where the other children, born of the same parents under different conditions, were distinguished for opposite qualities. The little boy I speak of had a decidedly spiritual and intuitive turn, and most richly supplied the place of the little boy that died.

Another case of marked character I had related

to me by a gentleman who received the account from a lady who was personally knowing to it. A female member, in good standing with a Presbyterian church in the city of New York, was treasurer of a benevolent society connected with that church. During her pregnancy, she was tempted to, and did, embezzle a large portion of the funds intrusted to her. Her child was born to become a thief. Its first manifestations were acquisitiveness and secretiveness in marked excess.

One of this gentleman's own children too, he assured me, to his great grief, had inherited the perversions of his mother's state during pregnancy so much, as to grow up to the practice of stealing, repeatedly and persistently. None of the other children had this peculiarity. But during the gestation of this child, an unhappy division occurred between the husband and wife, which issued in separation, and ultimately in divorce; and the mother in this time taxed her whole mind to appropriate as much of the property as she could—was consulting lawyers, and using every means to obtain an unjust share of it, and the consequence was, a thief in the character of her child. And the father assured me he felt greatly resigned on

account of it, when the little son was removed by death at the age of nine years.

Take another case of a different character, which I heard related not long since by a lecturer in one of our cities. A man of great energy and decision of character—an engineer and machinist, was employing himself most intensely for several months, in the construction of a huge steam-engine and other apparatus, fitted for a very large experiment in the line of water transportation. His whole days and evenings were frequently given to concentrated study to perfect the powers adapted to propel the mighty vessel, and it was during these months that his *daughter* received her embryotic life, and was undergoing the process of gestation, doubtless also with the sympathy of the mother somewhat in the same work; and the consequence was, a female child of huge mathematical and mechanical powers—of great tendency to invent and construct—great powers of propulsion—as the lecturer expressed it, “a regular steamboat of a girl,” who will no doubt take her place in the midst of the powers that be, and be of very essential service to *some* cause on the woman’s side of the question.

Take two or three more cases which I find related in a little work entitled "The Empire of the Mother," by Henry C. Wright. One is concerning an organic tendency to useful labor. "D. P. is a woman whose experience is instructive. She lives but to labor; not for love of gain, but from the love of useful action. She never wastes her energies in labors that benefit no one; but they are ever directed to something useful. A restless, anxious spirit, which she cannot control, is ever prompting her to useful and benevolent action, in household labors, in out-door exercise, and in actions that are beneficial to her neighbors. From childhood, the same uncontrollable desire to be useful to somebody, has led her onward and governed her actions. *The cause.* From her conception to her birth, one irrepressible desire governed the activities of her mother. All her energies of soul and body were directed to useful ends. She was ever on the alert to find opportunities to do good to somebody. She literally went about doing good, and ever found it 'more blessed to give than to receive.' The same tendencies appeared in her child at a very early age. Even as a child, she was ever devising some plans that had in view the

good of others, and had an extraordinary aptitude to execute her own benevolent purposes. Hers was a rich and glorious inheritance.

"The Child Visitor. Another fact, to illustrate the power of the mother over the organic conditions of her child. L. F., ten years old, never can rest at home. She is ever running here and there, restless as a wild bird in a cage, just from the woods. She ever pines to be abroad. Is ever teasing her mother to let her go visiting. Knows no rest, no enjoyment, except in going from house to house, making calls, and getting up parties among her mates. Visiting seems to be the one overmastering thought and passion of her life.

Cause. The father was a hard man, a drinking man, and the terror of his wife. During her child's entire pre-natal life, to avoid him, the mother was abroad, making calls, going from house to house, getting up parties, and making visits. Her entire waking hours, during that period, were thus spent. She saved her child [which was probably her motive] from the drunken father's influence; but she stamped upon it the stamp of a restless visitor, and unfitted her for any steady, useful employment. It will prove a sad legacy to the child as she passes

on to womanhood and enters into the natural relations and encounters the stern realities of life as a wife, a mother, and actor in the great drama of humanity."

Once more: "the following sad incident," says the same author, "occurred in my experience. I had lectured in a country town in New England, on the pre-natal life and education of man. A woman, a mother with her son of three years old, called upon me. I was much interested in her boy, so perfect in its physical organization. The child stepped out of the room, attracted by other children. To the mother, I said, 'What a healthy, noble boy you have. One of whom any mother might well be proud.' To my amazement, she, bursting into tears, exclaimed, 'I long and pray for his death! It would be an infinite relief to me to lay that form, so healthy, strong and perfect, in the grave.' 'Your conduct,' I replied, 'seems most unnatural and monstrous.' 'I know it must seem so to you, sir, still I long to see him draw his last breath in childhood, for so surely as he lives, he will become a murderer, and meet the murderer's doom on the gallows.' 'On what do you base your unmotherly, unnatural prophecy?' I asked.

‘On my own conditions before his birth,’ said she; ‘from his conception to his birth, I longed and labored for his death. I did all I could and dared to do, to kill my child without killing myself. My heart was filled with the spirit of murder against the life of my child. He struggled into life against the spirit of murder in the heart of his mother. That he was born a living child was my deepest anguish, for, too truly, my spirit foreboded what he must be, whose pre-natal life and education was completed beneath a heart whose every throb was a threat of death, and a protest against his existence.’ ‘But,’ I asked, ‘does his post-natal life thus far correspond with your conditions during his pre-natal life?’ ‘Oh, too truly, too fatally,’ said the weeping mother; ‘I cannot awaken in him the least sympathy and consideration for the persons of others. He is utterly callous about inflicting wounds and death on others. If his parents, or anybody, offend him, he strikes at their faces or persons, with whatever sharp or deadly weapon he may happen to have, or that lies within his reach. I dare not leave him alone with other children, for fear he will kill them. God forgive me!’ cried the poor mother, ‘I knew not what I was

doing! I knew not that my conditions were being stamped on my poor, unconscious, unborn child."

We might recite more cases, but the foregoing are enough. Now, what does all this prove? It proves, if any thing is proved, that the first or natural birth is quite as important, or may be made so, at least so far as this world is concerned, and in some respects vastly more important (having connections that run into eternity) than the second or spiritual birth, which is made so imperative in the Christian experience. And it is quite as much under our control!

IV.

*CONNECTION OF THE NATURAL BIRTH WITH THE
SPIRITUAL; MARRIAGE, ETC.*

HERE let us be very careful. I would not, for any consideration, lessen the importance of the new and second birth of the Christian, for I hold to it most radically. I see it as a necessity grounded in our hereditary nature, and I see also its philosophy in a most affecting and humiliating spectacle of a fallen and degraded, and divinely uplifted humanity. But is it not easier, generally speaking, to accomplish this new birth, and when accomplished, is it not infinitely superior, in vessels more cleanly, nobly, and originally prepared, than it is in souls shockingly neglected and debased by a natural parentage?

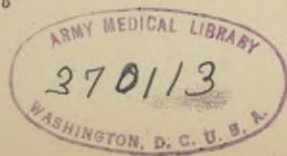
Here, I know, a question may arise as to the immortality of such souls at all, as only receive a natural birth from natural parentage, and do not experience the new birth of the Spirit. It is the

faith of many that only regenerated souls attain to immortality. The *merely* natural life is so utterly defiled with selfishness and wickedness, that, if the powers of the heavens are not ingrafted on it, it may only flourish a while in these earthly dominions, and, after death, inevitably sink away into utter destruction. This, I say, is now the belief of many Christians, of various denominations, and of some even of the most intellectual and rational sects, and is growing among them. And all such may ask the question — How can it be possible, with this view, that the merely natural birth can vie at all in importance with the spiritual? Is not the spiritual the *only* one that is crowned with glory and immortality?

But without committing ourself to this or that view of the question thus proposed, it is to be observed that our subject can be prosecuted to all its practical conclusions without it. For, with or without the immortality of the natural soul, it is certainly a *vast security* of the new and spiritual birth, to provide vessels of nature so pure and noble that they can easily experience it. And indeed, may not the subject be pushed to an absolute *certainty*, that generation itself may become,

by the power of Christian truth and practice, so eminently holy, that the natural birth shall *insure* the spiritual—that the power of hereditary evil shall become so broken, (if not utterly abolished, in the far distant future—in the day of Messiah's perfect reign upon earth) that the grace of the skies shall descend without obstruction into a sufficiently purified natural humanity, and raise it, *en masse*, to the glory of the angelic state, and to fellowship with all that is divine, imperishable and immortal! This is the faith which assures and comforts the writer. Certainly, a purified natural soul must invite and attract all spiritual influences, and the first and second births may thus become so at one—so in harmony from like spiritual causes, as to be somewhat identified in their nature, when a regenerated parent may say, as he looks upon his new-born child—Behold, the fruit of the womb is holy, for the Spirit of God hath sanctified it to me!

But more of this in the sequel. No one, certainly, can avoid this conclusion without affirming an utter disconnection and non-affinity between pure natural vessels and the influx of the heavens into them. And if any should go to the length of



this absurdity, then we should posit our argument upon those souls who *do* escape the second death, and rise in the regeneration. For though the purity of their natural life may have not been the cause, or had any power in attracting the spiritual influences, (but who can suppose such a thing!) yet it cannot be said that when those influences enter and operate in the soul, they do not connect themselves with the natural organism they find there, and that it is not all the better for the new life, the better that organic foundation is prepared for it. And further than this, we should also argue for the practical result of an improved humanity in *this* world — should aim a blow at the foundations of all crime, impurity, sin and misery, here upon the plane of our earth-life alone, — leaving the question of immortality entirely out of the subject. But I wish the reader to understand that we do *not* shrink up into any such needless and diminutive proportions. We allow to the subject all its scope — all its grand and glorious expansion.

We renew the question, then — Is it not easier, generally speaking, to accomplish this new birth, and when accomplished, is it not greatly superior, in vessels so cleanly, nobly, and originally pre-

pared? Let us do our best, we can only, in the present state of the world, make an approximation to purity. Human nature *will* come into the world more or less defiled and imbruted. The refinements of selfishness are too deeply embedded, even in the spiritual nature, to be rooted out by one or many generations of ever so perfect practice; and therefore, the second birth, with its regenerative consequences, will ever be a necessity, through struggle and combat, until sin is entirely finished, and everlasting righteousness brought in. And even then, there is progress from natural to spiritual, without conflict, for ever and ever. But it is precisely to this pitch of human perfection that our nature, in "the restitution of all things," is to be brought; *viz.*, to the *end of hereditary evil*,—when children shall be born into this world *without* any bad tendencies—without any malformations of soul, brain, or body, and when the whole effort of religion and education will only be to refine more and more, and spiritualize, enlarge, and elevate the nature, freed from all conflict with absolute evil. "The Lord of hosts will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over *all* people, and the veil that is spread over *all*

nations. He will swallow up death in victory, and the rebuke of his people shall He take away from off *all the earth.*"

I speak not, of course, with regard to time; I am upon principles now; and I say, the sooner we see this — the sooner we understand and practise upon the principle of improving the births, and this by improving the marriages, and by regulating scientifically all the duties of marriage, (with the other regenerative means to be mentioned afterwards) the better will it be for the human race, and the sooner shall we strike at the foundations of all discord, of all good and truth, all happiness and misery.

And let none say that nothing, or but little, can be done in this respect, — that it is very fine theory, but, like many other good and true things, has the misfortune of being a thousand years, more or less, in advance of the age. No matter if it is a million years in advance. *It is true!* It is most *primal, radical* truth, and lies at the foundations of all human improvement. I hold up this truth. I wish I could devote my life to it. I wish that schools could be established, where classes of adult men and women, separately or combined,

could be taught these fundamental truths, and induced to practise upon them, and to love them better than silver and gold. Let the experiment be tried. Let only a few, two or three, if no more, or a dozen, start out upon these principles, and by prayer and faith and self-denial, see what can be done.

Suppose, for instance, the mother whose melancholy case was last referred to, who was instrumental in bringing a child-murderer into the world, had pursued an entirely opposite course. Suppose, instead of seeking continually the death of her child, she had been filled with a spirit of ardent devotion for the child's future honor and usefulness. And suppose, for this purpose, she had prayed earnestly to God, night and morning, each successive day, during the whole time of her pregnancy, that He would so overshadow her with his presence, so influence all her affections and thoughts, and cause his angels to attend her, as that her whole soul might be penetrated with heavenly influxes, and that even her unborn babe might be made to experience the purifying and refining influences which flow continually from the sanctuary of the Most High. And suppose, in

compliance with influences which could not but be given to such a state of mind, she had fixed her eye upon some noble height of possible attainment for her child, associating nothing with it but images of purity and beauty, or at least repelling every hostile influence or image which might intrude itself, and so dwelt as it were in a glad and happy atmosphere, with an imagination, for this future being, of continued usefulness, honor, and promotion. And in addition to this, suppose she had engaged, herself, in acts of beneficence and love to others, continually living and practising the ennobling virtues and graces which she would see inscribed upon the life of her child. Think you she would have given birth to a child-murderer? Forbid it, high and holy Heaven! Ah, how little have we yet conceived of the power of the mother over the yet unborn being which she is intrusted with at a time so fatal! Surely we may say, from what the fact itself warrants us, that just the opposite character would have been *as likely* to have been produced, as this young monster of cruelty.

Shall we undertake to say, then, that this is an *impractical* subject?—that nothing, or next to

nothing, can be done with it? I affirm that nothing is so effectively and radically practical. If it was practical to produce a murderer, it may be practical to produce a saint. If it is practical to cure, it is practical to prevent. If it is practical to reform, it is more practical to form. The truth is, men and women are so all-sufficiently selfish and lazy that they will not exert themselves even according to their best knowledge. And the devil has such a hold upon all this world's institutions, especially enthroning himself in the family relationship, that money and fashion and pride and lust and vanity will yet marry and give in marriage, while love and the spirit go begging for existence.

Sometimes, nay frequently, we hear men and women regretting that they have no worthy and laudable object of ambition—nothing commensurate with their immortal powers. Some will say, Oh! if they could only write a *book*, and embody what they do know, and let that go travelling through the world, a silent, powerful instructor. That would live when they are dead, and work when they are gone. How strange it is that so few have ever thought, or so little tried, for the

production of a work of more *living* genius — a volume more heavenly and practical — whose pages should contain the lore of a more active intelligence — whose style should be more beautiful, contents more rich, fame more lasting, than that of any volume now in the libraries of the world, — nay, which should be absolutely immortal in its duration and influence! An ever-fresh apocalypse of celestial verities! The Word itself, of the Old and New Testaments, embodied in a living organism, beautiful, scientific, pure, of historical accuracy and scholarly elegance, destined to be read by millions upon millions, to act upon untold ages, to be made even the companion of angels, and to circulate joy and peace and instruction forever! Such are the works which most any of us might produce. But instead of this, how we grovel in the midst of low romance, and a fictitious, perverted life, — the “books that *are* books,” and the boys that *are* boys, being equally scarce in the comparison here instituted!

But before any *thorough* and *complete* improvements can be effected in this way, some better attention must be paid to the subject of Marriage. Here is the rock on which the ages are built; here

is the Truth of truths, and the beginning of all good. If clergymen would only preach the gospel of salvation here, — tell what true marriage is, and encourage it to their congregations, — at least encourage the truest approximations to it; — if they would, only occasionally, which they might with the utmost propriety, unfold the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, in the spiritual and physical connections of human pairs, they might dispense with a large part of their theology; for nature itself would become so practical, exact, and regular, that the God of nature would work through it without obstruction, and the Holy Spirit find an almost involuntary entrance.

But now, what is marriage? Not any thing in the minds of the masses, — not any thing even with the *churches* in general, at all commensurate with its mighty magnitude and far-reaching influence. Confessedly the most important act for time and eternity, yet with how many the subject of mere fancy, caprice, and passion! Or worse; — a bargain entered into as a man bargains for an estate; — two immortals pledging themselves, body, bank-stock, houses and lands, and what souls they think of, to live together for a few years, and share the joys

and sorrows of life. The children of this union have souls. But the partners never thought of that. Theology and the clergy have to do with souls; and for all the deformed and suffering specimens of humanity brought into this world, there is the same old perpetual lamentation, and the same blindness to all original and fundamental principles.

I own, that in the present state of society, it is almost impossible to secure those partners who are most fitted by nature to enter into the marriage relation with us. It must be more or less of chance and circumstance, at the best—save in a very few rare instances. And human nature is so fallen and degraded, that the absolutely *true* marriage—the spiritual union of souls for eternity, is scarcely known or thought of. But with all our disadvantages and ignorance, we might do vastly better than we do. *Spiritual congeniality*—similarity of tastes and tendencies, is the law in general; and if there is no marriage in nature and the spirit, there *can* be none by our law-making, only artificial, external, permissive, (but by no means to be disregarded) and the fruitful cause of discord, sin, and misery.

Even taking the most natural views of marriage, that is, eschewing the spiritual altogether, and looking at natural character alone, and what grows from it, how palpable are the facts of human life and interest as founded upon the offspring of suitably married partners! It is safe to say, at least, that those children who spring from a proper and well-adjusted parentage (say nothing about the marked cases of extraordinary genius) will be *two or three centuries* in advance of the children of so many hap-hazard, harum-scarum marriages, in all that constitutes the perfection of civilization, and the beauties and conveniences of a well-ordered life. And what a waste of effort, and useless application of spiritual and theological machinery, upon such abortions, and pygmies, and crudities, and fag-ends of humanity, compared with what might be effected upon God's nobility as first born! Would that every clergyman could have a trumpet put to his mouth, to sound the truth with a voice of thunder to his sleepy, dozing, lackadaisical, would-be-spiritual hearers. It is in this sense that the modern reformers are right, in declaring, as we have quoted in our preface, that "the life and happiness of individuals, the love and har-

mony of families, the prosperity of states and kingdoms, and the protection of life, liberty, and person, are more dependent upon influences that bear upon human beings, before birth, than on any influence that can be brought to bear on them afterwards. What is *organized* into us, in our pre-natal state, is of more consequence to us, and more vital to our triumph over the temptations and obstacles that impede our progress towards perfection and happiness, than what is *educated* into us after we are born." The truth cannot be too often repeated. As to all the *natural* interests of humanity, the concerns of this world, moral and temporal prosperity, it is all true without qualification. But as there is a spiritual nature within this, and a cleansing operation to go on from above, and a possibility of ruin and loss to the soul too great to be estimated, unless we experience that process, there is much to be said of the evils, sins, and liabilities of our poor nature, and of the supernatural system that so surrounds and interpenetrates the natural as to cast up before us another and a different view of our dependences and destiny. And this we propose to glance at as we proceed.

Here I will only say, that the time is coming—

should be realized now in a measure — when not only a proper regard to the natural character, soul and body, will be observed in the selection of partners for marriage, but when none but more or less regenerate persons, or persons seriously determined upon that end, will think of entering the marriage state together, on account of the evils of one or the other, so disastrous to the offspring of such a union. But of this no more at present.

With a true philosophy of the relation of the sexes, we come at once to the foundations of all that is high and noble in humanity. We can do nothing thoroughly without it. But to expand upon this subject as a thorough exposition of its nature would require, would be to double the size of our little volume. And besides, the very heights and refinements of the subject, to which we should be obliged to carry it, would meet many unprepared minds to whom the present treatise will be more welcome and profitable as it is.* It must suffice to say, then, that although, in this life, we may not, from the very confusedness and difficulties of our worldly condition, come into the enjoy-

* See, however, for a full exposition of this subject, the author's work entitled "God in his Providence."

ment of that perfect union which the Creator of souls has yet in reserve for us, yet, with a knowledge of what that union is, we should be likely to come much nearer to it than we now do. At present, the young and unmarried have in general nothing to guide them but the suggestions of nature, and the dissolution of the holiest of all ties at death. Let them only know that there *is* a marriage of the spirit—that, in perfect consistency with the Saviour's announcement of the absence of all marriage in heaven, eternity does recognize an indissoluble union of male and female souls, analogous to the marriage of Love and Wisdom in the Divine Mind; and then, though in a confused human society they could not approach the holy of holies itself, and it would not be even desirable to, unless both parties were equally or suitably prepared, they would not blunder, as they now do, in the most indiscriminate connections—tyings-together, not marriages, with the most horrible consequences to the body and the soul, and the souls of unborn millions.

But we cannot amplify upon this subject here, only to say, how are *parents* accountable for the

encouragements and sanctions they give to their children's matrimonial alliances! And what inconsistencies are they guilty of! These same parents will frequently send over a whole country, and into other countries too, to procure good seed corn, fruit grafts, and other seed, to replenish and enrich their granaries and orchards, while they will encourage the most pitiful and indiscriminate marriage of their children; thus producing a harvest of discord extending indefinitely beyond the bounds of time. What they will do for a potato-patch, or a field of corn, they will not do for their own eternal sons and daughters! And if we enforce this law of human generation by going into particulars and details, or if we bring it into the pulpit, we are accused sometimes of a disregard to delicacy and custom. It is more delicate to grovel in the mire of sensuality and say nothing about it. Yet I know not why an earnest and pure-minded man may not delicately touch upon these foundations of life, even to the unfolding of many particulars not at all unbecoming the dignity of the pulpit, and the dispensing of much saving wisdom. The simple truth is, with purity and

knowledge and faith in our own hearts, we can say many things, which, without these requisites, we should neither find grace to say, nor ability in the hearer to receive.

V.

POSSIBILITIES AND IMPOSSIBILITIES OF HUMAN PERFECTION, AS BASED UPON THE LAW OF HEREDITARY DESCENT.

LEAVING the subject of Marriage, for the present, let us proceed to speak of the high possibilities of human perfection under the right observance of its laws and conditions. And here comes up the old question of times and seasons. Christians have much to say on the time of one's conversion, — even the hour, the day, or the year, when such a one received salvation. And no doubt, there are times and seasons when many persons become peculiarly impressed — when the spiritual nature is aroused, and a true and genuine conversion, that is, turning-point, is realized in the soul's experience. Sometimes this matter is deferred to the last of one's life, and even to a death-bed repentance. And some may be disposed now

to inquire, in consistency with the principles here unfolded, What *is* the time—the most hopeful and important time for a man's whole life, and eternity? And in reply I say, all times and seasons, for a result of such magnitude—such as can be crowded into a few days or months—more especially, intensified and fatal hours, and moments, are altogether out of the question. All seasons are important with God, and all have infinite connections, with man. Sometimes the crisis of a man's salvation, humanly speaking, may turn on one thing, sometimes on another. It is not for us always to say. With God, the whole of eternity is as one hour, or one moment, in which every thing for man is infallibly done, and done in the very best manner. Stand off!—all meddlers with theological machinery. But as the world is so much given to meddling, and persons will seek for times and seasons; and as there are, frequently, important crises in our destiny, turning-points, and decisive periods, let us say here, that were all other things equal,—the conditions below and the powers above,—and were nature itself in its true and perfect order,—the first birth of man would be *invariably* the most important crisis to him, even

in his spiritual course; especially when we take into view the marriages entered into, and the all-comprehending substance and qualities of character which are here so largely secured. If one had power and wisdom to regulate the *marriages* of the world, he might, I had almost said, dispense with all the *theology* of the world. But no, we say no such thing. We only see this one thing loom up into overshadowing importance. Let us rather say, theology would then come as a blessed bride from the skies, purified and transparent with celestial harmonies.

But inasmuch as this first birth is now so overclouded with evil; that is, the natural mind is so full of hereditary corruption, with so much discord in the spiritual and physical organism; and the good traits which we receive from our parentage are so liable to be overborne and crushed down with this evil, the spiritual which *might* operate from very infancy is not sufficient, in itself, in all cases, to be what is called the leading crisis to a sure and steady progress in the regenerate life. But I have no hesitation in saying that the time is coming — the possibility is in the race, of just this truth — if there are not some

who realize it now. (More of this in the sequel.) Children sanctified and saved from birth! Has it not long been cherished as a delightful thought in the Christian church? Let us, then, approach this subject somewhat from the prospective. And I say, if the salvation here spoken of is to be viewed in the most extensive sense, as connected with what goes before as well as with what follows,—with the natural, as purified and coalescing with the spiritual;—if it can be viewed in connection with the whole man, his whole genius, amplitude, and variety of moral and intellectual character; and if we may speak of what *may* be, rather than what is, and what the true order of his life should justify us in expecting; then I say, the time most spiritually dear to him may be *the moment of conception, and the period before birth*. For then is determined the very *ground* and *organism* of humanity—its distinctive form and fashion—its expansion or littleness—its majesty or abasement, as the *plane of operations* for the new and second birth of the Spirit. I do not mean to say that more can be done then for the glory and exaltation of character than can be done in *all time* after, but that this may be the *crisis* period—the

few months of greatest consequence. And, separating the subject entirely from the consideration of mere natural character — for there can be no doubt about the time here mentioned for that — and viewing it solely with reference to salvation in eternity, deliverance from the second death — whatever that may be ; I say, here, in the sanctities of this sacred crisis, may be the causal potencies, in connection with other divine means, for a certain and everlasting security.

But alas ! we know it is not so now, just because of the prevalence and extent of hereditary evil. We only point a hopeful finger to the future. It is well to see and realize the high possibilities of our nature. It is encouraging to all high endeavor. The prophet should always be before his time. The time is coming, undoubtedly, when all will be secured to eternal salvation by the inherited grace of childhood at nativity. The power of hereditary evil is to become just so broken by Messiah's reign. And if we are looking already too much to that future — to the prospective glory of the race, we may be pardoned, at least, for appearing a little too much in a hurry, while the great truth we are here laboring at is gradually

developed and illustrated in all its supreme and fundamental importance. At all events, the reader will follow me on to further and more comprehensive details, and to the final conclusion of the whole matter.

I overlook not here the original germ-soul which came forth from the Creator, and which, long previous to its incarnation in the flesh, was distinguished for its specific character, and designed to act a particular part in the world. Earthly parents do not *create* souls, but the germs are passed through and modified by them. Statesmen, Philosophers, Poets, Artists, Geniuses of every grade and character, with every individual soul of man, must be contemplated as pre-fashioned and pre-impressed with a distinctive form and tendency, which natural birth cannot wholly overpower, and which, at some time or other, after all the ravages and deformities of evil, must shine forth in them in all their predestined glory and brightness. (Though some may have to pass through the awful experience of the second death.) But still, this must not blind us to the truth of how much natural generation accomplishes, even in this specific purpose of the Creator. What He has designed He accom-

plishes by certain means. And natural generation is a part of these means. Our agency co-operates with his agency. And here, in a pre-eminent degree, I say, is the *proximate* ground and organic foundation of humanity. Here is the natural and ultimate plane for the operations of the Divine Spirit in the regeneration. And how much we may alter that, or interfere with it, by our observance or non-observance of the pre-natal laws — that is the very question. Every one can see how great is our agency in the production of some marked and occasional specimens of humanity, and how strong is the tendency to follow out the original bent of genius or disposition, be it good or evil, mighty or imbecile. There is a certain amount of fate in it. That is to say, a Socrates cannot convert himself into a Nero, nor a Newton into a fool. And the proportions hold with all human beings. We may even say, with the exceptions and qualifications soon to be pointed out — for no truth is more conspicuous — that there is more of character, more of virtue, more of influence and power, more of every thing which goes to constitute the greatness and grandeur of this world, dependent upon what a man may receive in

his pre-natal conditions, than all that education or the Spirit of God can frequently do for him in a whole lifetime. If you do not believe this, look around you. Who *are* our most influential men, our most eloquent men, our great writers, teachers, statesmen, philosophers, poets, and divines? They are men, chiefly, who have been *born* so, and for whom education and regeneration had a deep and splendid ground prepared for them in the organism of the infant. And all the little runts of humanity — men of no force, no talent, no prominent importance in the community, cumberers of the ground frequently — whence and how came they? Let nature in her powerful laboratories answer.

But it is to be distinctly understood here, that when we speak of the character or quality given to the soul at birth, we invariably include all that which has been accumulated by the education, training, regeneration, and all the discipline of the parentage and ancestry, and *transmitted* to the offspring. For if we do not bear this continually in mind, we shall be in danger of ascribing *too much* to the mere natural character, and not enough to the more spiritual activities of the life

itself. Personal discipline and experience is indeed a vast and solemn matter. We can hardly overstate its importance; but what I wish to press upon the reader's attention is, how all this *runs into* the natural constitution of the children who are born from out its influences. There are two ways of speaking of this subject, viz., individually, and collectively or in the race. Individually, it is undoubtedly true that the soul frequently receives more of all that which gives it character and influence, and insures its safety in after-life, from its natural parentage — from what is organized into it, (and other influences soon to be mentioned) than it does from all the influences of education, or all training and discipline afterwards. There are many exceptions. Education and discipline undoubtedly do more for some, who are fortunate enough to receive it, than their natural characters do. Many that would be nothing, or in great obscurity, without an education, arrive to eminence with one. But allowing for all the exceptions, and considering too that the best native qualities can be educated, as well as the poorest, we must certainly allow the marked force and impetus of the original character, and the sure success with which

it marches on against all obstacles, which no mere education could ever fit one to do without it. And sometimes in spite of the grossest lack of education. And how often too will it *secure of itself* an education, which the inheritance of mere mediocre powers will fail to do. Granting, then, the force of this original character in the individual, still, in the race, (and frequently of course in the individual) the effect of education and regeneration must be allowed to be pre-eminent. For without this training and discipline of mankind collectively, we could not have these high and improved results at birth. This is one way in which human improvement is *held* and *secured* in the race, without which, each individual, as to his native capacity, would be as though no one had lived before him. The whole education and culture of mankind is, in fact, in a constitutional way, rolled into the substance and organism of the soul at birth, each generation becoming more refined and perfect from what has preceded it. This, of course, when no counteracting and adverse influences have operated to obstruct it. And in this view, education assumes an importance, irrespective of its more immediate effects upon the individual life,

which is grand and conspicuous in the cause of the elevation and advancement of mankind. There is, in fact, a continued *circle* of mighty and reciprocal influence. Generation and regeneration, native character and highest culture, become rolled into each other, with every advancing wave of humanity. This is what we would have the reader bear in mind whenever we speak of original and native character. This is the importance we would attach to education, and this also is the meaning we would give to natural endowments. And while, in the individual, his native and original constitution is so frequently the prominent thing which carries him to fortune and success, or to degradation and ruin, and which cannot be fully outgrown or overpowered by the most assiduous efforts afterwards, (in this world at least) yet, *in the race*, sometimes in the course of a few generations, education, discipline, and regeneration *can* overpower it — can change and perfect the whole organism, and insure to us a humanity, even from the mother's womb, of a pure, and beautiful, and heavenly origin. And the individual cases of a highly operative Christianity in the course of a single life are of course included.

We do not, then, commit the error that some of our modern reformers are prone to, when they ascribe to the mere natural birth more importance than they do to the spiritual, and more than all other influences put together, in all time. When they make such assertions, which they do upon the conspicuous facts of great talents, genius, and moral power, communicated at nativity, they do not consider the possibility of the *loss* of all this — for a long period in eternity at least — from the tremendous overbearing surge of evil which makes such headway in all of us. They do not consider, neither do they understand, the necessity of spiritualization and cleansing by the specific application of a divine power, and the gifts, for this purpose, of holy anointing and outpouring from above. It is in the exercise of this power that so many eminently wicked men and women are sometimes visited by miraculous grace, and from some tender and susceptible qualities in their own sin-incrusted spirits, start out afresh, and rise in the new life, and make rapid strides in glory, *far* out-distancing many others in the race, who have received better natural organizations, and, according to all we have said, might be ex-

pected to start first, and keep in the advance columns. These are the exceptions to what we take for the general method. These are the special trophies of divine grace, showing how great are the supernatural powers above us, and how they can, when God chooses, overpower the more common and regular course of law, and assert the new life with supreme control. Though of course there is *some* law in *all* of it, and an unseen philosophy forever. And we should say that, *all other things being equal*, those who receive the best natural organisms at birth, the largest amount of hereditary good, were *invariably* most likely to experience the assistance from above. We, however, expect more of these apparently exceptional instances. We know not why we may not look for a special dispensation, more marked than usual, to the suffering and the needy, the poor and lowly, in the great day of God's power, in the crisis which seems so near at hand. Let God select, whenever He can, and thus abase the pride of man.

Now, in all such cases, and in fact in *any* case of spiritual salvation where, otherwise, ruin for ages in eternity might have occurred, what avails

it to inherit splendid natural organisms, and mighty talents and genius, only to make the ruin more conspicuous? Which, under these circumstances, is the most important — the natural birth, or the new birth of the Spirit? What doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, whether in wealth or talents, and lose his own soul?

Be it observed, too, that the very way to secure these good natural births — these noble inherited organisms, is to educate and regenerate the human race *after* birth. What folly is it, to talk so much of a mere birth and beginning — a solid, splendid foundation of natural character, and to magnify this as more important than all other influences that can be brought to bear upon it afterwards, when this very character is so largely the fruit and consequence of all this stir, and activity, and exertion in the human race, assisted from the skies, which, generation after generation, becomes rolled into the substance and organism of man at his nativity! “A good first birth is the main thing” — say these reformers. Yes, but how does this come about? By ages on ages of regeneration and improvement in the race *after* birth!

But if rightly considered as the most important

starting-place, as the crisis which *may* be made spiritual and clean, as the foundation of God in the human soul for all the after glories and graces which He may ingraft upon it, and which may become so pure as to secure eternal salvation from the very beginning, then it is an important thing indeed. Then there is no birth which can come after, of which it can be said, it is any more important. Both, then, become rolled as two spiritual crises into one,—one grand and superb character, all of God and his Holy Spirit,—the divinity and nature meeting and blending in human unison. Such will be the music of the age to come. Such indeed we may commence and approximate now. This is what I would make prominent; and it is for this purpose, and to show the control we have over this human crisis, that this little volume is sent out into the world.

Much may indeed be done for this first and natural birth at *any* time, without waiting for the future. Much may be done now, and always, to secure the best natural characters. But the chief of this is by a more proper attention being given to the marriages of mankind, and by states of preparation before conception, and during the

whole process of gestation. Of these we shall speak more largely in the sequel. All the rest is from regeneration and improvement before and after birth, in the race, and in the individual.

Another distinction may be noticed here. We allude now to those *unconscious* influences which come to the very young infant, both by influx from heaven, and from parents, nurses, and all its surroundings. The truth is, if the child had no education at all, but was left in utter neglect, it would grow up little better than a wild animal. Its hereditary evils are so great that they would be likely to overpower the good which was of nature only, and produce a growth of passion and depravity scarcely human. God has provided against this by ordering the pure influxes of heaven to flow into the new-born being, so that it is not in poetic phrase only, but a sober, literal truth, that "heaven lies about us in our infancy," in a special and most intimate manner. The hereditary evils not yet being active in the infant, "their angels," who "always behold the face of the Father in heaven," can draw very near to them in their state of innocence, and infuse into them an abundant measure of the pure, celestial

influences. And what they receive in this way, and from the kind attentions and loving caresses of parents and nurses, is of immense service to their future character, without which the mere natural endowments they receive at birth would not preserve them from downfall and ruin. It is these remains of things celestial, not only of first infancy, but of after-childhood, which secure to them a successful foundation for their spiritual regeneration.

Then again there is the possibility of what can be done by a thorough and systematic work of education and regeneration from the very beginning. It is impossible to say how great the triumph would be over the worst and most hopeless cases, by beginning very early, in a more patient and persevering way than has ever been done yet, and continuing with unabated vigor. Whether the most malformed and perverted organisms could be entirely overcome as to their prominent defects, and the children reared in at least passable and respectable virtue and intelligence — this is the question. We know that under the present general system they are not, but are generally doomed to infamy and ruin. What *might* be done is a very powerful

question. We do not believe that every thing can be done that some people imagine, but we are quite ready to allow the most favorable construction of this theory, and to accord to such education all that can possibly be claimed for it. The case of Fénelon with the Duke of Burgundy is an example of what may be effected in later life. The young Prince, being heir apparent to the Kingdom of France, had the most assiduous training bestowed upon him by this excellent man of the church, and with the most signal and triumphant success. The Prince was a very hard and difficult case to manage. In his earliest youth, as history says of him, he showed symptoms of character sufficient to excite the deepest fears. He was naturally cruel, ferocious, inordinately proud, unfeeling and irritable, exhibiting his spite even towards inanimate objects. To his own brothers he felt no common fraternal bond of attachment, while he accounted mankind in general as mere atoms, not united to him by any resemblance. But by the thorough and persistent efforts of Fénelon, he was transformed to a mild, amiable, humane, and modest person, the subject of admiration to the whole nation. Other instances of even more marked

transformation might perhaps be given. So that mere natural character, produced by birth and organization, must not be allowed to overpower our perceptions of what a mighty and well-ordered discipline can effect upon it; and it is not from any disposition to disparage the latter that we seek to make the former so prominent. Were we writing a treatise on Education, we should give to *that* subject all the prominence it deserves. But surely we need not suffer our eyes to be diverted from the important truths of the pre-natal conditions, and causes too that we can *control* before birth, by any admissions of the power and effectiveness of post-natal instrumentalities.

Offsetting the above case of successful education, we may here adduce an example of an opposite character. A family in which the authoress of the work before mentioned* was extremely intimate, affords the following instance. "The father was a man of talent, but had, until the age of forty, made pleasure his pursuit, and lived only for himself. At that period, having inherited a fine estate which he wished to transmit to his posterity, he reformed and married.

* Intellectual and Moral Qualities Transmissible.

“ Although a highly educated man, Mr. A — appeared to possess no knowledge whatever of the conditions necessary to be fulfilled, in order to insure a healthy and strong-minded progeny ; and was guided in his choice more by the animal propensities and selfish sentiments, than by enlightened intellect. His dissipated life, having brought him in contact with women of loose morals, had induced a mistrust of those who live much in society ; he, therefore, chose what he termed ‘ an unsophisticated child of nature ; ’ but in fact, an immature, half-educated girl of sixteen. Immediately after his marriage he retired to his estate, remotely situated, the neighborhood of which contained very few inhabitants with whom his refined and cultivated taste could assimilate. His active temperament and versatility of talent, however, found sufficient excitement in improving his newly acquired property, in frequent excursions to the metropolis, and in anticipating the birth of an heir whom his ardent imagination invested with the beauty and grace of its mother, and the talents and enthusiasm of its father ; to whose dawning intellect he proposed devoting his leisure hours, his scholastic lore, and his knowledge of the world.

“But alas! all those bright anticipations were doomed to bitter disappointment. For his youthful wife, having few tastes and pursuits in common with her husband, was necessarily left much alone; her mental faculties being little exercised, her physical system immature, the brain of her child was imperfectly developed, and his system weakly organized; hence the efforts of his father to bestow a liberal education were fruitless; and after years of anxiety, vexation, and mortification, the unhappy father was constrained to admit the mental imbecility of his son.”

How evident it is, therefore, that there must be *something to educate*, both in moral as in intellectual culture, or all our efforts must be fruitless. We cannot *make* brains, nor manufacture spirit, very extensively, after the child is born. We can, however, to a certain extent, and we can turn what we have into more or less of heavenly order. And while we are disposed to allow the largest influence and the most miraculous and heaven-aiding success to the cases like Fénelon with the young Prince, and many others which might be produced, yet we must never forget that God required even the Messiah himself to be begotten, not of the flesh

— not to descend from any earthly lineage on the father's side, for this would have so entailed the evils of many generations upon the inmost soul of the Son of God, that they never could have been expelled, even by divine power, so as to have glorified the whole humanity, (different from any mere human being) and presented the DIVINE MAN to an adoring world.*

And in reference to all these human cases, there is one thing we wish to keep specially prominent here; and that is, that notwithstanding all the heavenly influences upon infancy and childhood,— the unconscious and powerful moulding of the character in this tender and susceptible state,— and notwithstanding all that education does manifestly do, and the wonders besides that it *might* do — heaven only knows how great, — yet still, the best of these natural organisms are as capable of all this as the poorest: and if so much can be done with the poorest, how much more can be done with the best! — showing, after all is said, the primary importance of securing good native and original constitutions for the groundwork of all that

* See, for a full illustration of this Christian doctrine, the author's work — "Compendium and Life of Swedenborg," Section 4th, pp. 25-53.

can be built upon them. And who would not rather build upon splendid and magnificent organisms—the foundations of God in a clean, pure, ample, harmonious natural humanity, than upon souls crushed and mutilated from birth, full of all manner of obstruction? Nay, would not heaven itself, generally speaking, look down with more complacency upon such souls, and open more fully into them from infancy? Let us be careful, then, in our estimate of the comparative importance of native and acquired abilities, that we do not attribute undue influence to either. With these exceptions and qualifications, we trust we may now go on without danger of error, with the main subject under consideration.

And be it observed again here, that we do not forget the distinction between what the original germ-soul was in its emanation from the eternal divine essence, in its passage through the heavens, and what it has acquired from the natural parentage and the orderly or disorderly observance of the laws of generation. The differences which we see, after all educational and regenerative influences are deducted, are not, all of them, the consequences of pre-natal conditions in the immediate parent.

age, nor the remote ancestry. Human souls differed in their germs and first beginnings from all past eternity — if we may use the word eternity in regard to them. (I wish I could give the testimony of the Seers here, but it would not meet the purposes of this treatise.) They differed — they must have differed, in their first emanations from the Divinity. The soul of a Shakspeare, it would seem, must have had something more in it than that of an ordinary or inferior person, in its first emergence from the infinite Essence. And yet, when we see how the abuse of nature's laws even in the *immediate* parentage, can quench all the light and glory of the spirit, and turn God's image into a shattered, vacant, melancholy idiot, let us not be too ready to assign *any* limits to the influence of good pre-natal observances on the part of the immediate parentage. I say, we know not how great, or how far-reaching, is our agency here, nor the tremendous responsibility that rests upon our act of begetting a new being. When we think of the *marriages* too, that we have in our power to regulate! What masses of filth — what reeking, rotting humanity, born from mere lust of the animal nature, in the sties and pens and cellars —

heaven forgive me!— for I might as well say— opulent and princely chambers of our great cities! What can we do for all these people? What can we educate or train them to be? Much, by the work of the philanthropist. Great improvements indeed, by faithful missionary labor. And especially if we could take them from infancy, which, alas! for the most part we cannot. But we might as well imagine the scene changed. Imagine all this sad and sorrowful humanity— this heritage of filth, to be the clean and orderly offspring of a sanctified and holy marriage, and the best production of a systematic obedience to the pre-natal laws and conditions. How would education, and Christianity, and every heavenly influence come as it were voluntarily to its own, seeking by a happy affinity to lift its subjects to the skies! Instead of an effort to force the healing and blessed influences upon them, it would rather require an effort to prevent them; for as genius *will* tend to the development and manifestation of its own peculiarities, so will moral and spiritual proclivities arise with an inherent force, and seek the corresponding qualities of their own native Fountain.

But it is impossible to conceive how human

beings of the very lowest order — the worst and most imbruted of men, born like swine in the pest-houses of wickedness, can arise by *any* process, natural or supernatural, to the supremest heights of virtue and perfection. And yet they should be able to do so, to constitute with full force an argument against our main position. What will not apply in an extreme case will not apply in any. The slightest influences must be the same, in proportion, as the greatest, and *vice versâ*. See, then, the result. A man or a woman born so, unless *very* happily educated and cared for, must to a great degree live so. They may be converted and saved, but the most likely thing is, that they will die as they were born, mere sensualists, corrupters and corrupting. Even granting that the most unfavorably born could, by any appliances, be turned to a decidedly Christian and honorable course, as some of them are, yet certain it is they must remain comparatively *low* in the scale of perfection, and the law extends even into eternity. An idiot born certainly does not bloom out into a Shakspeare, or a Bacon, immediately after death; and we should think not for a long time after. And the same law holds in morals, and in propor-

tion, with every one. Great things may be accomplished, undoubtedly,—marvellous transformations may take place in the spiritual world, when all obstructions of the flesh, of materiality, and surrounding circumstances are removed from the soul; and many that are *here* idiotic and inferior may expand there, by time and culture, into wonderful amplitude and beauty. But is it not generally recognized that what is first implanted and first shaped, by conception and birth into this natural world, remains so to a certain degree forever? The same as the effect of a man's whole lifetime here — his experience as a moral agent and actor, stamps him morally for the life beyond the grave. There are born poets, and born mathematicians, and mighty intellects of various character. It is rational to suppose that they preserve their distinctiveness — that is to say — they do not drop into fools and pygmies by passing into the spiritual world. If it is true in intellect, in any one department of intellect, it is true in morals. A good *seed*, a good *germ*; it is impossible, without gross blundering, to raise a bad stock out of it. And so it is impossible, with an injured or inferior seed, to raise a fair and full production. It is true in our

wheat-fields and orchards; it is equally true with our children.

Now therefore I say, although a man may be converted and saved, (whatever theory of salvation any one may adopt) who has received his earthly existence under the very worst conditions and circumstances, and that may be therefore *to him* the most important and hopeful period of his life, yet if this same man had been born morally as our great intellectual geniuses are intellectually, or if the utmost possible perfection had been secured to his native organism by careful observance of the pre-natal laws, he might have been so much in advance of his position and attainments at any given time, as to cast in the shade all that he could then have gloried in. And what shall I say further?—that it would have been *impossible* that he should ever have gone the downward course? I will say, that for all you or I know about it, it would have been. Nay, that nothing is more rational than that it should have been. Could Shakspeare have *possibly* been a fool, or a block-head, with that splendid native endowment? Could Bacon have *possibly* led an obscure life, once born as he was? Could Franklin have *possi-*

bly been a weak and drivelling character, with that magnificent brain? He needed an education. But such characters find for themselves an education. Could Swedenborg have *possibly* been a murderer or a villain? Could Washington, Howard, Melancthon, Fénelon, and a host of others, have *possibly* been among the ruffians and outcasts of humanity, after the splendid endowments of their first birth? My answer is, that the Providence which required the peculiar mission of these men, required a definite, original organism at birth, as well as education and training afterwards. I know not what certain nice metaphysical casuists may say against this presentation, but I say, after making all allowances for a certain, unmistakable, *practical* freedom of the will, I am compelled to recognize a *Destiny* among men — a destiny in every thing. There is not a sparrow that falls to the ground, not a single motion of the obscurest human mind, not a particle of flying dust, not the least step, or movement, or exertion of any kind put forth, but is just as much under law and sovereign destiny, as the rolling of the planets, or the rising and falling of the tides. Freedom is practical and rational, but not absolute

in the sense of entire origination of any act of the mind. Every thing has freedom *in proportion to its nature*—one thing no more than another. Man has no more freedom in proportion to his nature, than any thing beneath him. But man is higher, more complex, and his motions more difficult to be traced. Man has reason; therefore he has freedom according to that reason. But even that reason has its laws, as inevitable and necessary as any thing else. There is as much necessity, or certainty, in choice as in no choice; that is to say, as much in voluntary efforts as in involuntary, only of a different kind. A man *must* choose that which, all things considered, is the most desirable to him at the time. He cannot choose any thing else. And inasmuch as we are obliged to recognize first settings out, periods of decision, turning-points, moments of destiny in every human being, so it must be recognized, in perfect consistency with all Christian truth, but always with the exceptions and qualifications before stated, that this first birth, and the fetal life that precedes it, is or may be *the thing*—*the event*, most important and most decisive in the whole earthly history of individual man. No one will certainly misunderstand

me now, even though the cases of absolute spiritual security may be but one to a million. I say, there is this possibility in the human race, and may be a large approximation to it now. And the cases of horrible ruin and misery which so frequently occur in society, and which run far into eternity too, I believe, I know, are traceable many times to this terrible depravity organized into a man from his very infancy. Bear with me till I illustrate and make clear my position. I pity humanity, more than I blame it, in the ordinary sense of that word, for the terrible fate that hangs over it; but this pity is greatly comforted by the assurance that all will be well at last. Look ye, brothers! If, after such a birth, a man becomes a "devil" who might have become an angel, then, in spite of all argumentation, and the most misunderstood mysteries of religion and the Bible, I find the chief, the most radical cause of it, in this fatal organism of the baby's brain, spiritually and physically considered. After that, perverted education and training. But with a good first birth, the whole thing might have been prevented.

Stop, now! Be not too hasty in drawing conclusions. Say not that this is to overthrow the

whole moral nature of man—to abjure all freedom, and consign him to a ruthless and unmerciful fate. For, whatever the *writer* may believe concerning the freedom of the will, which, for want of space, and not being necessary, one way or the other, to the main subject, we cannot here go into at full length,—be it observed that it is not said that this inbred constitutional evil was such that the man *could not resist it if he would*. It is only said that if, after birth, a man becomes a devil who might have become an angel, the *chief* and *most radical* cause of it is recognized in the infant organism. You may say he might have resisted this tendency to evil. Perhaps he might. Call it then the *occasion* of sin. Still, if this evil had not existed, there would have been no sin. It matters not to the argument here, whether he could have resisted or not. I only say, the fact that this evil was in him was the cause or occasion of his weakness, temptation and fall. And was it not? Had he been perfectly pure and holy, with no *tendency* to evil, would it have been *possible* for him to have gone that way? It must have been so even with Adam, or whoever the first sinner was. “Subject to vanity” from the first—was he not? If not, in

some degree or other, — if there was no hidden germ of inclination from the supreme good, it would require, I think, more than a theologian to account philosophically for his fall. What a matter of simplicity this is! In the name of common sense, is it any thing, can it be any thing, but the stuff that is in us, that causes us to assent to evil? Fortunately for the subject, it is not whether a man has *power* to resist or not; the simple truth is, if he yields, it is on account of this inborn corruption. Or, call it imperfection. Or, it may have been at first, ignorance, unsuspecting simplicity. No matter what it was, it was something in the man—in the organism. Now therefore I say, he that is best fortified with a noble organism at birth, all other circumstances being equal, is least liable to fall; and he that comes into the world with the poorest, most malformed, most animal and brutal structure, with least of the spiritual and divine, is most likely to realize all the sad and bitter consequences of sin and misery. This, I say, is the chief and most radical cause of it. At least it is the occasion which makes it inevitable.

And if we see a certain *sort* of fate in it, we must not reflect too despondently upon the Creator, for,

though sin and misery extend their dominion far over the tract of eternity, we must remember that God is good, and good only; and that even evil is but an instrument in his hands to increase and magnify the amount of that good, with the utmost impartiality, to all who experience it. The Devil himself—the Prince of all the rebels, if there be one, (and I am strongly inclined to think there is, though not of Milton's pattern) shall finally, after the second death, see his own existence and mission in the light of an all-comprehending and beneficent wisdom which shall shame all the patch-work theology in the land. Forgive me if it is not so.

But we must not depart from our main subject. With a good first birth, I say, all this train of evil might have been prevented. "But how so?" inquires one. "Can you have people born better than were our first parents? Can man come into the world with a more perfect moral and spiritual constitution than Adam had? And yet he fell. What is to prevent the same catastrophe from occurring again, but such an operation after birth, from the supernatural heavens, as shall secure him forever?" Here indeed is involved an interesting point in

theology. And we reply by saying that it is undoubtedly the plan of the divine providence to produce a humanity on this planet, in the far-off ages, which shall be so grounded in the spirit and the life of Christ, and so settled on the eternal foundations, as to be utterly impregnable to evil and all its charms. Yes, by the very experience through which the human race is carried, all the way from Adam, to have it firmer set in moral rectitude, in the whole natural and spiritual mind, with regeneration so perfect as to be absolutely invulnerable to Satan, and beyond the possibility of fall! And this is no wild dream of ours. It is the grand possibility of the human race, when Christ shall have triumphed completely over all the world — made a thorough and universal work — abolished sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

It must be remembered that our first parents, and their immediate descendants, were in the *infancy* of the human race, tender, inexperienced, more like children than grown men; and it was the great God's providence that they should pass out of that comparatively infantile state, and by the conflicts and battles with evil, know what it is, put it away,

come into more external states of mind, even into the sensual and outermost degree of it, and so live in the enjoyment of entire nature as to be the full-grown, manly representatives of the highest possible human perfection. All this could not be without evil. But evil having accomplished its mission, and the human race re-instated in more than its original glory, it cannot fall again, for the Lord in his Divine Humanity has made provision against that, and on this Rock we stand forever, securely blessed, beyond the touch of sin.

So that the futile objection is done entirely away with, that a good first birth could not prevent this train of human evil. It could not at the creation, but it can in the redemption. It could not in Adam, but it can in Christ. It could not with our first parents, for they had not the experience that we have; but after having tasted of the bitter fruits of evil, and put it away from us, and become strong in Christ, and gone on to perfection, there is no longer any falling away to sin. There is the possibility of complete redemption, both of soul and body. Glory be to God Almighty — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and everlasting praises to the Lord of glory forever!

Now, although it be myriads of ages before this consummation is fully realized, yet the principle of it we can see now. We can realize in part now. And we can so order the births of our children, by purity and wisdom in our own souls, and especially by suitable marriages, and an accumulation of the heavenly life in the lineage of successive families, as to impart to them, from very infancy, a principle of saving efficacy, even an organism of controlling power, which shall be more to them than all the preaching and theology of Christendom can effect for them in any crisis afterwards. It may even be to them as the second birth of the Spirit, which plants them securely in the Kingdom of heaven. And still the efforts after this are indispensable and inestimable, and can be reckoned only in eternity. Education, even, can effect miracles. And as before said, what may not an early, infant education do? We cannot conceive of the power which lies hidden in the parental sphere, especially in the mind and heart of the mother, over the tender susceptibilities of the infant. As soon as the child is born, it is in constant reception of influences, invisible and real, which are very much characterized by the prevailing disposition

of the mother. The quality of her spirit enters even into the milk which is drawn from her. An angel only can see the difference between the sustenance furnished by a regenerate, Christian, pure and heavenly attempered woman, and one whose very flesh is corrupted with evil, and all the sources of whose life flow with secret poison. Then there is the spiritual sphere which envelops the child. The very touch, the looks, the voice, are all potent with character and influence. And by beginning early (we cannot begin too early), with such lessons of instruction as the child can be made to feel, to see, to sense in many ways;—by instilling a quick sense of right and wrong; by checking all bad tendencies and encouraging all good ones; by patience and perseverance and faithfulness, with a deep sense of parental responsibility; and in successive years, by following this child up with what might be done, and what ought to be done, and what, some day far in the future, will be done;—what marvels of transformation may be accomplished—what floods of iniquity checked and thrown back forever! “Oh that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears,” if weeping would do any good, for this culpable, shameful,

heaven-daring neglect of parents towards their own children! Yes, the influence of education is acknowledged, and we never can make too much of it. It is even possible for a splendidly organized child, with every natural encouragement and promise, in his brain, his body, his temperament, his noble soul—it is possible for such a one, by neglect or perversity of education, to be reared into a monster of wickedness, and perhaps to find his way to the gallows; while an unfortunate and pitiful specimen of native organic depravity, by such a training as might be given, would ascend by direct gradations to heights of honor and usefulness. But what does this prove? Only, that if the superior organism should have the same advantages, the native and primitive superiority would also keep the advance through the whole course of life. For it must be remembered that education may as well be bestowed on the best as on the worst materials; and this being the case, and all other things being equal, where is the period of highest and most radical importance? Between conception and birth, most evidently. The spiritual qualifications and exceptions before mentioned the reader will of course bear in mind.

VI.

REGENERATION TRANSMISSIBLE BY NATURAL DESCENT TO THE CHILDREN OF REGENERATE PARENTS.

REGENERATION by the Divine Spirit may indeed go so far, either in this world or the next, as to effect the removal of all hereditary evil. This is its special work. But what I would have understood is, that even *this* work is transmitted by natural descent to the children of regenerate parents. And they are born, not *merely* with good natural qualities, but, in so far as they partake of the renewed temper, disposition, and affections of the parentage, may as truly be said to be born of the Spirit, as when the divine grace descends in its most copious effusions upon the hearts of its immediate recipients. And here may be laid open a point in theology interesting to many believers, who are yet too apt to believe only, and in a narrow way, and not to see, with a wide ex-

tended vision, the truths of a beautiful philosophy. It explains how it is that so many excellent men, of high Christian attainment, preachers and theologians, frequently, of great eminence and piety, have become anxious and troubled on account of not being able to fix upon any particular time of their own conversion. And the fear has wavered in their minds, from this cause, whether they have really experienced the necessary change. This cause might indeed exist even if the change was wrought entirely in their own living, conscious experience. For it is not necessary that we should be able so to time this experience, as to designate it by the year, the month, or the day. Influences which are so gradual may surely accomplish their silent work, and much more effectually, frequently, without our consciousness of sudden gusts, or pentecostal powers. But when it is reflected that the change so much relied on is *not* necessarily wrought wholly in our living experience as men, but may have been in part the heritage of a gracious birth from a regenerate parentage, which kept the sacred current flowing and widening all the way through life, it is apparent at once that many a favored mortal may have received so much

even at his nativity, that nature itself was all redolent with the Spirit, and the consciousness of time thoroughly obscured by the light of eternal realities.

Here indulge a passage or two from the Rev. Dr. Bushnell: "The children of such a stock are born, not in the flesh only, or the mere natural life of their parentage; but they are born, in a sense most emphatic, of the Spirit also; for this parentage is differed, as we are supposing, age by age, from its own mere nature in Adam, by the inhabiting grace of a supernatural salvation."

Again; speaking of the possibilities of this grace — "The child is not to have the sad entail of any sensuality, or excess, or distempered passion upon him. The heritage of love, peace, order, continence and holy courage is to be his. He is not to be morally weakened beforehand, in the womb of folly, by the frivolous, worldly, ambitious expectations of parents to be, consecrating all this nonsense in him. His affinities are to be raised by the godly expectations, rather, and prayers that go before; by the steady and good aims of their industry, by the great impulse of their faith, by the brightness of their hope, by the sweet continence

of their religiously pure love in Christ. Born, thus, of a parentage that is ordered in all righteousness, and maintains the right use of every thing, especially the right use of nature and marriage, the child will have just so much of heaven's life and order in him beforehand, as have become fixed properties in the type of his parentage; and by this ante-natal nurture, will be set off in a way of noblest advantage, as respects all safety and success, in the grand experiment he has come into the world to make." — *Christian Nurture*.

How manifestly true and admirable all this is! To what extent this work of purifying the natural humanity may be carried, is a question which may meet with different answers, according to the faith and reason of men. Why not to the utter extinction, some day far in the future — in the great day of God's perfect work upon the earth, of the evil hereditary principle? This is the faith of the writer. We see no more reason for the endless continuance of moral evil in this world, than we do for the same continuance of poverty, sickness, or any other evil. We believe this world is destined to become a perfect heaven in ultimates. We believe that all the interests of virtue will eventually be as safe,

and its triumphs as glorious, without evil as with it. But not without difficulties, struggles, and the overcoming of obstacles—which we could imagine as well in heaven itself. But there is no call for amplification here. We know very well what the hereditary now is, and the weight of oppression it entails upon us:—that the tendency is so sure, and often inevitable in its operation, as, in spite of all efforts to the contrary, to carry its possessor frequently to the heights of heaven, or sink him to the depths of hell. Not for the hereditary in itself, but for what is voluntarily acted from it. We see, at least, that it is so in this world, and we have reason to believe it will be measurably so in the world to come. I know that, in a certain sense, a man may be said to receive no punishment in the spiritual world for his hereditary evil. That is to say, as Swedenborg would perhaps say, he receives there no arbitrary, judicial inflictions from an external source, for these evils; but he must surely suffer, for a time at least, there as well as here, for a diminished capacity, a discordant, angularized, unfortunate nature, and the necessary outbreaks to which this nature is liable; and it is the parents

who are more accountable than he is, for what they have organized into him at his first birth.

Now, therefore, seeing what this hereditary nature is—how it spreads and magnifies itself over two worlds, we may surely demand the most serious consideration of it. The great problem of to-day is, how to inaugurate a new style of humanity at birth. The *Christ* child—born of the Divine Spirit, not of impure lust,—the second advent of the Lord in a new *first* birth. For, be it well considered, this second birth of the Christian nowhere gives such hopeful and substantial fruits, as when, by hereditary descent and special efforts to that end, it culminates in a beautiful and comparatively pure child, fresh from the Creator's hands. And if Christians would only see this, and think more of their *offspring* as well as their own souls, and so behave, with what a tremendous impetus would this second birth be invested, going down to the generations of men, and springing up in noble armies of God's elect, to do battle with the hosts of hell, and "beat down Satan under our feet"!

I repeat, then, without fear of contradiction, that all the preaching and theology of Christendom,

cannot step in after this fatal first birth, to produce the glories and wonders that might have been produced before it, and reflected with incomparable magnificence and splendor after it. If they can, let Shakspeares, Bacons, Miltons, Washingtons, and Swedenborgs, be produced from Ann Street and the Five Points. No, no; even the natural character — the genius of a mighty mind, affords an equal argument for the spiritual of this subject; for regeneration goes down the channels of a natural humanity, glorifying all its faculties, as the blood of ancestry runs through the families of man. So, then, the clergyman has his office, and it is a glorious one: and the Physiologist, Psychologist, and Philosopher has his. Clergymen have too much overlooked the order of nature: —

“Nature, that never swerves nor bends,
To suit itself to sacred whims.”

Conceiving of spiritual things as quite disconnected from physical things, — having no systematic pneumatology, or philosophy of spirit at all, — unable to tell how it differs from matter and how it does not, save in its manifestations and effects, — and seeing not the organism of the soul as well

as of the body, and how it is transmitted by hereditary descent in and with the body, and modified by a subtle and potent psychology there; they set a value upon the new birth, the second birth, as entirely disconnected from the first. Or, if we do hear in the churches, of the "children of believing parents," it is faint, and has a dull, ecclesiastical sound, and is almost entirely destitute of the deep importance of the subject. It is a mischievous heresy, fraught with danger to the soul. It is not alone in the marts of business — in the halls of pleasure — in the resorts of wicked men, and in the enticements of youth and of the senses, that perdition opens its gates and hurries off its thousands. Damnation is at the birth of the infant! and the great God's salvation shines forth nowhere more conspicuously than here. Nowhere, more powerfully, does his Spirit operate upon human nature, than in this most miraculous first birth. One is as miraculous as the other. They are both under sovereign law. Whoso is not prepared to preach this has no commission from highest sources. The Bishop may lay his hands upon his head, but futilely. We have a more authoritative "establishment" — a higher and more demonstrative "suc-

cession," here in our plain men and women. The head of the infant, the body, the fine integuments of his physical organism, the very quality and structure of his soul, are determined by a pre-natal process, and here are the scriptures of God's truth to man. We may do much, I have said, by careful watching, faithful nurturing, training and unfolding; but all our efforts are now limited and conditioned, both in degree and kind, by this fated organism which lies here before us. This is the fruit of our obedience or disobedience to the laws established. Not ours only; the people before the flood were engaged in the production of that organism; and the thousand generations to come cannot entirely undo what the thousand previous generations have been doing. Eternity itself will witness to this act; and the very angels of heaven stand, some higher and some lower, for what the earth has contributed to their quality and genius.

The most important question, then, I say, — the question of questions, is how to inaugurate a new style of humanity at birth. "There are people," says Dr. Holmes, "who think that every thing may be done, if the doer, be he educator or physician, be only called in season. No doubt — but *in season*

would often be a hundred or two years before the child was born: and people never send so early as that." But let us see, notwithstanding the great truthfulness of this somewhat satirical remark, how really hopeful a case we have here for humanity's practitioner. And here I am anxious to impress upon the mind, not only that these controlling and powerful pre-natal conditions exist; I think the assent to this proposition may by this time be fully accorded: but what is most practical and experimental is, that they are so largely under our power — that we ourselves can so easily control them. This is manifest from the cases which have already been given, and many more of a well-authenticated and interesting character, where not only the whole nature seems to have been affected by the previous condition of the parents, but where particular traits, both of a moral and intellectual character, have been prominently introduced into the genius of the child. How slight are the causes which serve to throw the whole force and current of nature out of its accustomed and expected order; and what variations of form, disposition, and talent, in the same family, under different influences! As before said, it is not all charge-

able to the immediate parentage, or even the most continued lineage. Causes undoubtedly existed in the Eternal Mind—in the first germs of souls, for the most diversified forms and characters of men. Without this, it seems, the varied and specific uses of the world could not be provided for. And as there are so many varied qualities *in* the Divine Mind, it is reasonable that different proportional combinations should have entered into the original essences of different human souls. It is not at all reasonable to suppose that all the mighty hosts of intelligences, on all worlds, with all the differing grades—rank on rank of genius, quality, and power,—and in the angelic heavens, of cherubim, and seraphim, and beings of supernal glory and brightness—the varied ministry of an infinitely-varied and stupendous providence, all sprang forth from an absolute equality of origin. We can believe more easily the story of the seers and our own rational imagination. Still, with the facts at command, we cannot tell how much the original tendencies may have been subverted, nor how much may have been added, or what particular traits may have been quickened to promineny or marvellous proficiency, as in the prodigies and

marked cases continually occurring amongst us. If a rounded common sense may have been all crushed to idiocy, if the happiest dispositions are so easily produced by experiment and calculation on our part, if spirituality rather than inertness, intellect instead of dulness, mathematical and mechanical genius, and distinguished beneficence, and roving and restlessness, and theft, and even a murderous hate and ferocity, can be traced so directly to causes which we can control, what may not be done by the most assiduous study, and christian application of this subject? Parents, what can be done! I put it to you with all the force and moral importance I am capable of commanding. Are there not, indeed, special and proximate causes within our power, of almost miraculous reach, by which we can mould the new-born being at will, thereby laying a better foundation for his second birth than all other efforts can effect afterwards? Nay, without which it would seem, in many cases, there is little or no hope of *ever* effecting a very great deliverance from the filth and iniquity of the world.

And consider what the effect must be of a continuance of such practice from family to family for

several generations;— what a determined and persistent course of high Christian living, purity and piety, — a rolling-on of the stream of divine grace and healing, from sire to son, and into all branches of the lineage, from year to year and from generation to generation, might bring to the households of faithfulness! What more than royal privileges — heaven save the word! — what a nobility of God's own choosing — what a durable aristocracy of honor and glory! Can we *ever* have it so with our present habits? Can we think of it for a moment without utter faithlessness?

VII.

LAWS AND CONDITIONS OF SEXUAL INTER- COURSE, PARENTAGE, ETC.

WHAT then shall be done? Bear with me now, if I come into immediate contact with the most private and responsible practice of human beings and of parents. For if the sexual intercourse of parties cannot be regulated and honored by a higher law, and nobler considerations suitable to its sacredness, then we must forever despair of any thorough and radical reformation of the masses of mankind. Here is the great source and fountain of depravity, or the initiation to purity and beauty of the sweetness and order of heaven. Until the nuptial act itself is made holy, in vain do we look for holiness in the temple of humanity. And yet there is nothing, perhaps, of any approaching importance, which is so overclouded with utter vacuity of mind, divorced from its sacredness, and surrendered to earthliness and

vanity. The sin of it is scarcely contemplated from the utter indifference to its virtue. And yet is there an act delegated to mortals by their Creator, of higher or more hallowed import? Is there any worship more sacred or divine?

One hardly knows how to express himself here. The real truth is so at odds with the common estimation and practice, that the charge of affectation is apt to be made. I shall relieve myself at once, then, by quoting from a very questionable book, and from very doubtful authority. Of course I have reference to seership, and to statements made from a professedly higher view than mortals are generally privileged to make. But what I wish the reader to observe is this:—that though he may not give the least credit to the source of the statement, and disbelieve utterly in the possibility of any condition which would qualify one to see and say as much, yet the language employed is certainly admirable, and if not the description of a reality, it is what *ought* to be such, and what, I am persuaded, will be, when this earth is redeemed from its corruptions. Speaking of a planet far distant from the supposed boundaries of our solar system, where the inhabitants have preserved themselves

in a pure and unfallen condition, the author says — “They are taught here that there are signs from the Lord which precede conception, and that, in the nuptial sanctuary, there is present a light which descends from the Lord Himself. This light is visible for seven successive diurnal periods of repose, during which they sanctify themselves in an especial manner, both husband and wife. At the end of that time the conjugal ardors descend from the Heavens, while the wife is absorbed in celestial communion, and the bridegroom receptive of the Divine sphere. So their children are born in holiness and shapen in sanctification, and the fruit of the womb is called holiness.

“Here I saw a fair-haired young maiden, robed in spotless white, kneeling before a golden altar. She was in speechless devotion, and unconscious of my presence. In her genius she was celestial, and one of those who know truth from good. I was permitted to explore the quality of her mind. She was worshipping the Lord and beseeching Him that He would so pervade her future spouse that all the fruits of their union might be holy in their initiament; that they might be called holiness from their first state; and that she might be

a mother to such only. She had been instructed in the arcana concerning the subsequent state of the embryo after the conception. Her thoughts were of the utmost intensity of purity, as it seemed to me, and although in her thought she was only conscious that she herself was desiring the things which she sought, I was enabled to see the Lord in His Divine Operation present in her interiors, in the crystal palaces of the will, and in the understanding also.

“What is called passional attraction on our earth is an inversion of Divine order. Conjugal attraction is entirely different. The diffused joy of the Divine Presence is in all the breathing frame. The pulse is slow and rhythmical. The melting look of the eye expresses chastity mingled with unuttered fondness. The soft night brings no delirium. The yieldings of the bride are in obedience to the descent of a direct influx from the Lord Himself; but more than this I am not permitted to narrate.

“The existence of married associates upon unperverted orbs is one perpetual festival, during which the first ardors of youthful love, free from all the disorders which attach themselves to the sexual passion in our subversive race, ascend in a

continual succession of the most serene and interior, yet sensationally exquisite delights, from the natural, through the spiritual, to the celestial degree. The children born of such unions are like the blossoms of the tube-rose upon its stem; and their external bodies, free from hereditary impurities, are sweet as the bosoms in which they nestle and the lips which they delight to kiss. Birth is a benediction, and the rite of nuptial union an act of worship."*

Again I say, if this is not true, I should like to see so much wisdom practised on our poor earth. We do not ask the reader's assent to the literal history, but to the spirit and wisdom of it we most religiously do. Let us proceed to say, then, more directly, that married associates, in order to have pure children, must pay more attention to their habits of intercourse, and view it altogether from a higher principle, in the light of science and religion. The begetting of children is no work to be left to mere impulse, passion, and chance. And I would ask — what greater wrong can be conceived than to bring into the world a family of human beings, (and alas, how many families!) tainted and

* *Arcana of Christianity*, Nos. 611, 612, 616, 291.

corrupted from the mother's womb, with inherited dispositions which are sure to make them miserable, if not to disgrace and degrade them as outcasts and criminals?—children who have no agency in their own existence—no voice for or against the life which is thrust upon them, but who might, frequently, could they be heard in advance, and for all that *this* life is concerned in, pray earnestly to heaven for non-existence rather than the wretched burden they are called to bear. Such parents would not, generally, willingly introduce their children to the schools of vice and crime which this world ever offers with open doors to all who will enter. They would not willingly throw in their way any moral obstruction, or tempt them aside into forbidden paths. But they do more than this, ignorantly though it be, but from henceforth, to every reader of these pages at least, let it be a conscious, heaven-daring sin. They *organize into them* (a work seventy times more efficacious than any education afterwards) the spirit of selfishness, hatred, theft, drunkenness, murder, jealousy, revenge, ambition, avarice, prostitution, and every kind of evil which afflicts humanity. These propensities are sometimes so strong that they are led,

as it were, irresistibly, to the practice of that particular evil which was prominent in the parents, one or both of them, at the time of conception, and perhaps in the mother during the whole period between conception and birth.

Consider now but *one* evil—to many it seems the most trying evil in the land—this vice of sensuality between the sexes. Who shall say how much of fornication, prostitution and adultery, is *directly caused* by the predominance of mere lust and sensuality in what should be the holiest of all acts between the married associates? Consider how children are begotten! Not in the spirit of a heaven-beseeking, God-regarding, spiritually-prepared state of the parents, for a suitable time previous to the nuptial rite, but with the indifference of the animal—with the stupid disregard of the brute beast of the field. Christian parents, too, who would deem it a sacrilege not to prepare for a church ceremony—baptism or the communion—will enter upon what should be the holiest of all acts with mere animality and thoughtlessness. And the poor laborer, perhaps, who has been at work all day, with every faculty tired out and exhausted, will come home weary and spirit-

less and stupid, and assume the dread responsibility of begetting a child! Is it any wonder that we have sensuality, licentiousness in all its forms, and the most hopeless specimens of dulness and vacancy, — mere runts and pygmies and dolts of humanity, with an initiation to existence like this? Would not the wonder be greater if we did not have them? Considering all the effects of organization — its power to communicate function, &c., “can there be any doubt,” says an English writer on this subject, “that the peculiar state of the organization, and the peculiar exercise of every function, at the moment of erotic orgasm [excitement of love] must exert the *most* powerful, the *most* undivided influence over the organization and function of the delicate, susceptible *ens*, then and by these very acts, called into existence? * * *

Can it be supposed, then, to matter little whether the new being be the product and the personification of intellectual, or of mere sensual pleasure! or whether that pleasure be one of gentle emotion, or burning passion!”

But it is not among the lower and common classes *only*, to which we have passingly referred, that we trace the inadvertences alluded to. How

often is it the case, that, among the higher and more fashionable circles, the excitement of the ball-room, or the gaming-table, or the stimulant wine, or the late supper, is made the preparatory means of a like prostitution of the highest and holiest rites of humanity! Whereas, if we should view this matter aright, and proceed wisely and religiously, while it would be divested of none of its appropriate pleasures and satisfactions, but elevated, consecrated, and sublimated, by the divine approbation and the influx of a higher joy from the orderly fountains of life and being, it would also tend to the introduction of a nobler and more spiritual humanity.

I need not remark, more than has already been observed, upon the nature of the preparations here demanded. Suffice it to say, that with a general information on this subject, and a realization of its importance truly becoming its greatness, no person will allow himself or herself to engage in the generative act with any indifference whatever. Such a one *cannot* divest himself of the humanities, or all that distinguishes him from the brute creation, and see and realize nothing spiritual and immortal in it. Both parties, therefore, will endeavor to

preserve that becoming attitude of soul and spirit towards each other, by which all the acts of the body are sanctified and made holy. If a general and habitual state of knowledge and religiousness exists in the married pair, particular observances of state and preparation will suggest themselves. But most particularly, to young married associates who have not yet become parents, and to all others who are contemplating the procreative office, it is certainly the suggestion, both of duty and wisdom, that a time so fraught with the very sources of life and character should, to say the least, be invested with as much seriousness and mental concentration as the hours given to any other duty of great interest to humanity.

“ And at eventide kneel ye together, that your joy be not unhallowed.
Angels that are around you shall be glad, those loving ministers of
mercy.”

I am aware of the delicate nature of the subject on which I am writing, and my words are chosen and premeditated. I am fully aware also of the duty which I owe to my fellow-creatures, and of the possibilities which may result even from this little treatise. I write, therefore, as one who knows his responsibility. And with all due defer-

ence to delicacy, and custom, and the present state of morals and manners, I must not hesitate to call that man or woman morally insensate and stolidly blind, who does not feel the importance, and act upon it, of this most responsible and far-reaching act of the powers of life and enjoyment. Let such preparation, then, be made, as would naturally suggest itself to sensible, refined, and intelligent men and women. Not only immediately before the nuptial act, but as a constant habit of the mind in reference to it. Also, during the whole of that most important period—the time of gestation with the mother. For it is a question with some—Which has the most influence over the future being, the moment of conception, or the long period of gestation? Let all vanity, and folly, and impurity, and lust, and mere self-indulgence, be put entirely away; and let the requisite circumstances and surroundings be as abundantly provided as they can,—the right food for the mind, the proper stimulants and excitements to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature; the uplifting of the whole soul to the sublimer mysteries and glories of eternity; the exercise of the very best affections of the social, family, and domestic circle; the most active

human love and beneficence for all around; books, if they are needed; beautiful objects of nature and art, as they may be required and commanded; and above all, a spirit of calm, tranquil, human joy, such as proceeds from a devout trust in the Eternal Father; in short, as perfect and happy a frame of mind as it is possible to obtain from all the resources of nature and the spirit. And if, in addition to all this, both parties will make it a special point to retire in secret and in prayer to God, and beseech the Almighty for his best benediction on the prospective parents and offspring, I have no doubt that the gates of heaven would be opened, and a select and spiritual influence descend into the souls of the parties, impregnating the very germ of the future offspring, fashioning it, even in the mother's womb, after a nobler pattern, and saving it from a thousand maladies of our fallen and depraved humanity. Try it, oh parents to be, try it! Is it not strange that so few do make any systematic effort of this nature? They see what is done in the brute creation — what the farmer does with his stock, and how he labors to improve each breed, and how successful he is, but they seem to think (or rather not to think — to be utterly

unconcerned about it all) that nothing can be definitely projected in the human world — that the style and character of children is a matter left entirely to chance — that parents have nothing to do with it — that it is a matter left entirely to the Creator, as to what the offspring may be, as though God had forsaken his method of acting by law here, and left the whole thing to human hap and confusion! When shall we learn our vocations and duties?

I will here relate a case of actual experiment upon the principles here unfolded. I quote from the work before alluded to — *Intellectual and Moral Qualities Transmissible*. The author's name is not given, but it is known to be a lady. She had previously been remarking upon an opposite case, of a young mother of indolent habits, and educated for display. "During the whole time of her pregnancy she occupied herself in paying and receiving visits of ceremony, practising music, embroidery, and other fashionable accomplishments, and in endeavoring to attain the reputation of a superior taste in dress. Her reading was limited and confined to works of imagination. Her child was born at the full time, but so brief

and easy was the labor, that neither physician nor nurse was present. It was plump and fat enough, but with a head diminutive in size and soft in quality.

“Years have not altered those conditions; the child in intellect is below mediocrity, and the man will be the same. In the other instance, the mother was past forty years of age, of an energetic temperament, active habits, and self-educated. For some months previous to the birth of her fifth child, she had become a convert to the belief in the transmission of mental and moral qualities. To test the truth of this belief, she exercised her own mental powers to their full extent. She attended the lectures of the season, both literary and scientific; read much, but such works only as tend to exercise and strengthen the reasoning faculties, and improve the judgment. The domestic and foreign reviews, history, biography, &c. She was also engaged in the active duties of a large family, in which she found full scope for the exercise of the moral sentiments, but never allowed any thing to disturb the equanimity of her temper. When her time came, she was in labor two days; all her suffering, however, was forgotten

at the birth of a son, with a head of the finest form, firmest quality, and largest size, — with the reflecting and moral organs very conspicuous. A head, in short, on which nature had written in characters too legible to be misunderstood, strength, power, and capability, and of whom it is already said, ‘He is the youngest of his family, but will soon become its head.’”

Here I wish to convey a caution. Be not *too* anxious to secure results. An *over* anxiety, or too much attention, may work anomalies in the infant organism, and produce either that very anxiety, in an unhappy manifestation of it, or distortions and enormities. Be calm, unanxious, looking to God and trusting in Him, and surely no danger can come of a *healthful, judicious* excitement of the faculties and affections, but much harm may come from the neglect of it. Have the *right kind* of reading, too. Mr. Combe mentions in his *Constitution of Man*, a lady of considerable talent, who wrote to a Phrenological friend, — “From the age of two I foresaw that my eldest son’s restlessness would ruin him; and it has been even so. Yet he was kind, brave, and affectionate. I read the *Iliad* for six months before he saw the light, and have

often wondered if that could have any influence on him. He was actually an Achilles."

But every sensible person must know the effect of imprudence, over-excitement, ill-chosen books, indulgence in bad temper, and every thing that tends to derange the faculties, or lower the moral nature. The caution, therefore, will be heeded. Surely, judicious attention is better than utter neglect; and where no attention at all is paid, the indulgence of bad habits and injurious practice is almost sure to ensue.

As an example of the latter kind, the work of the lady above quoted affords another melancholy instance. A lovely woman, remarkable for her good sense and kindness of disposition, had married a man of superior abilities, with whom she lived in the midst of elegance, refinement, and fortune. "Thus situated, her children were born under the happiest influences, were beautiful, bright, and some of them highly talented. At the age of thirty-eight, the mother ceased bearing children, and felt happy at the thought of being at length free from the confinement attending the cares of infancy. This state of things continued a few years, but was unexpectedly changed by

symptoms of pregnancy. This was a most unwelcome prospect for one who had entered into the dissipation of fashionable life, and was determined, in future, to enjoy and not suffer. Various means were resorted to, to avoid the approaching calamity, but were unsuccessful. After much discontent and repining, a girl was born, inheriting a large portion of the unhappy, repining, and bitter temper which possessed the mother for months previous to her birth.

“The attempt to violate the laws of the Creator, in this instance, has been most signally punished; for in the perverse, rebellious spirit, and cloudy brow of her unhappy daughter, the mother now recognizes the temper in which she so imprudently indulged during her pregnancy.”

Here is an occasion for the recognition of the truth of what is sometimes deemed nothing but a “beautiful superstition” of the Irish; viz., that “those children who are received from the Almighty as blessings, prove to be so; and that those who are not received as such, turn out the contrary.” A truth of great consequence, surely; for how can these feelings of pleasure and thankfulness with which the children have been looked

for, operate otherwise than causatively into a happy organic disposal of the fetal substance?— a blessing indeed to the parent and the child! And *vice versâ*, with contrary feelings.

I was conversing with a lady—a physician, upon this subject, yesterday,—one who has paid great attention to it, and made it the study and practice of her whole life. She assured me, that in numberless cases under her own cognizance, and sometimes by her direction, the quality of the offspring was so far from being a thing of chance, that particular patterns and fashions of humanity, in the face and in the character, had been repeatedly produced by direct design and effort of the mothers. One was the case of a noble boy who, but for her advice and counsel, would have never known existence, but who was born into the world in full and beautiful proportions, and now rejoices in existence at the age of fourteen years. His mother had determined upon an abortion, from a supposed malformation which she imagined would inevitably be produced in the child, by a fright she had received while in pregnancy, from a disagreeable animal. She was greatly alarmed by it, and a physician had been called for the purpose. She

was persuaded by the lady above mentioned not to attempt it, but rather to fix her mind intently upon a higher pattern—for if a low and disagreeable object could produce its likeness, surely a high and ennobling one could—and she accordingly kept her mind so habitually fixed upon a certain individual of high and commanding reputation in the nation, that the child, when born, bore upon his countenance unmistakable resemblances to the individual referred to. Here was an ugly impression overborne by a good one. It so happened that I knew that child when quite young, and had often remarked to him, in a sportive way, this very resemblance, for it was very striking.

Another case was that of a beautiful picture—a portrait which a gentleman had hanging in his room, and of which a friend, as he once entered the room when this gentleman's child was sitting in it, exclaimed—"Why! what a fine likeness that is of your child!" "No," replied the gentleman, "the child is the likeness of the picture." "How so?" inquired his friend. It proved that the mother of this child had so intently kept the image of this picture in her mind, and looked at it so much and so admiringly, during her preg-

nancy, that it had reflected its beauties upon the young child's face! It had daguerrotyped them there, both in color and in feature!

And as to spots, and marks, and impressions of various things, from so slight a circumstance as the longing for a particular kind of fruit at this critical time, which are so often produced upon the body of the child, why may we not generalize from these facts to more important conclusions? If so slight and transient a thing can produce such permanent results upon the body, what may not the indulgence of a whole course of feeling, disposition, and thought, for several months, do for the soul of that same child, and how great is our responsibility! Oh, *how* great — and still how heedless are we all! Must there not be a new interest, a fresh stimulus, imparted to this matter, — a new era of pre-natal education, that our children shall not come into the world “conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity,” but as holy and sanctified from the mother's womb, born beauties, original specimens of a higher design, “that our sons may” indeed “be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace”?

Now, I believe with the lady referred to, the substance of whose conversation is reported here, that, within certain limits, God has determined that we shall have about such children as we want;—that He has established laws, which we are to study and discover just as we do any other laws of nature, and conform ourselves to them in the rearing of families. If we want certain results we must obey certain laws. And we can have good children, or intellectual children, or even particular patterns and fashions of humanity, by putting into requisition the orderly means and conditions for securing them. Right marriage is one of them. Prayer is another. Samuel the prophet, you remember, was specially prayed for by his mother, previous to his birth, and the child was in answer to the prayer. 1 Sam. i. 5-28. A good woman has often been heard to say of a particular daughter — “That child is a child of many prayers; I have no fears concerning her.” There are other means; and these means will be developed more and more clearly, according to our purity and right use of them. The time may come when, if we want musical children, we can have them. If we want sons and daughters of

art, or children of mercy and beneficence, we can have them. If we want poetical, philosophical, or spiritually-minded children, such as shall adorn and enrich the world with the contributions of their taste and wisdom and piety, we can have them. All this, I say, within certain limits established by the Creator above us, whose supernatural resources and directions, as already recognized, are fatally beyond our reach and our control. But within the limits of our agency, especially with regard to the general moral and intellectual character, and with the most perfect recognition of the divine over-ruling, we may mould and fashion the original humanity of the world just as we do any thing else. And it is our duty to do it. If we do not do it, we dishonor our commission as pro-creators of the human race. Why should we have power to direct every other interest of mankind, to order our houses, and superintend their particular styles, and improve and beautify the architecture of the world, and have no power at all over the differing styles of humanity? Is a man's house of more importance than the man himself, or the children who live in it? Must they all be taken as of chance, or as of exclu-

sively divine direction? Surely we need not so stumble in the mere hap-hazard work of thoughtless generation, as to produce and present this mass of filth and folly to the Creator's sight, — oh! in a thousand times worse sense than the great bard lamented the vain and strutting actor, — this mass, I say, of diseased and dwarfed and mutilated men and women, so bad that you would think that some of nature's journeymen had made them, and not nature herself, they imitate humanity so abominably.

But I should not recommend, as in the case before alluded to, placing before the mind's eye one particular image, either of art, or of a particular person: this may do in some cases of feebleness, where the mind is unable to control itself by general principle, to displace a disagreeable impression by an agreeable one: but in general, a simple elevation of the mind to its loftiest ideal — to God, and heaven, and angelic purity and beauty, leaving it to the Divine Providence how to shape and fashion the infant, would be better than to call up particular images of persons or things, as we know that imperfection reigns in all, and there might be danger of imbibing the bad qualities as well as

the good of the particular image so summoned to the vision. Indeed, so quick and susceptible is the tender human embryo on such occasions, that particular traits or features of certain neighbors who have been especially kind to the mother during pregnancy — who have brought certain gifts and bestowed them, have been found distinctly visible in the child's character or countenance.

All this shows the vast importance of a willing, determining, designing mind on the part of the mother, in reference to her offspring. Much may be done — much ought to be done, by availing ourselves of our knowledge of the laws of nature here, as in any other department of art or culture. Here is a grand field for human improvement. And with design, and care, and persistent attention, (not over-anxiety) we may vary the styles of humanity as we vary the fashions of any lesser interest, and introduce to the world better original specimens, with less care and trouble to ourselves and our children, and with praise and gladness and triumph in the Creator's name!

But we must pass to another branch of the subject. Be it observed here, in reference to the specific act of sexual conjunction, that there are

some well-intended, but false theories abroad. It has been seriously put forth by a certain class of physiologists and reformers, that the act of intercourse should never be indulged in except for the legitimate purpose of procuring offspring. Doubtless, from the great and unlimited abuse of the sexual powers — the gross indulgence which extends through nearly all classes of society, this extreme of continence and prohibition has been promulgated as the only legitimate and orderly use, and design of the Creator. This indeed shows purity of intention, and is an approximation to the truth. But we are compelled to regard the subject somewhat differently. Much as we deplore the sad consequences of the present depravity, we recognize another and a different function in the sexual adaptation — one more consonant with the high powers of the soul, and favorable to the spiritual nature. The truth is, were the human race in that divine order which it should be, this intercourse between the sexes would become the direct channel of the communication of a really spiritual life — an energy and vitality which would be felt through the whole physical frame, and diffused throughout the soul. For, gathered into this cen-

tre of the organic system, are the most highly sublimated essences, both of the spiritual and the physical nature, such as furnish the seminal substance with its power and vitality, and in which is the very seed of man. Here, in fact, is the prime focus of life and energy. There are several focuses in the human body: the hands are such; hence the force of magnetic power communicated by them. The mouth or lips are another. Hence the disposition and strong impulse to-kiss, or communicate. But the organs of generation are, above all others, the grand focus of all the powers and capabilities of man. Here are concentrated the very life fluids of the system, both spiritually and physically. Hence the pleasure of communication, for here also is the seed of a new life — of a new being, imparted to the natural mother.

To quote the words of the great philosopher and seer again, (Swedenborg) "The origin of conjugal love is divine love, divine wisdom, and divine use, which three proceed as one from the Lord, and thence flow in as one into the souls of men, and through their souls into their minds, and there into the interior affections and thoughts, through these into the desires near the body, and

from these through the breast into the genital region, where all things derived from their first origin are at once.

“Indeed, love and wisdom with use not only make man, but also are man; yea, what perhaps you will wonder at, they propagate man; for in the seed of the man is his soul in a perfect human form, covered with substances from the purest things of nature, out of which a body is formed in the womb of the mother.”

We now see why it is that the organs of generation are imbued with so much power and energy, for it is in the seed therein contained that are gathered the first and last principles of man — the concentrated substance of the whole soul, from whence proceed the highest uses to the human race. Highest use is always attended with greatest pleasure — a benevolent provision of the Creator to stimulate the performances of these uses. Hence also, when perversion takes place, and when it is carried to excess of mere sensual indulgence, those pleasures begin to pall, and finally to die out, and infuse disgust, just in proportion as the way is obstructed to the soul. How holy, then, is true

marriage, and what sources of divine life is it the medium of between the parties !

It is not, therefore, always necessary that the motive to such intercourse should be the procurement of offspring ; though it must be confessed that this is the highest motive and the noblest use which can actuate the parties so associated. And it should always be held in remembrance, to redeem us from any perversion or abuse of the mere animal nature. And it cannot be too strongly enforced, that *any* indulgence, from mere animal pleasure, is a prostitution of the high powers of humanity. It is this, and only this, from whence has emanated the excesses and sins of mankind, to a degree horrible to think of, which has filled the earth with evil. But an orderly intercourse, by the pure and true of heart, who would shun all mere sensuality as sin and abomination, I feel authorized to say *need not always* have for its motive the procuring of offspring, for the Creator has designed that such communication shall be the medium of a reciprocal, essential life between the parties ; and if it were not for the preponderance of the flesh, what potencies might not thus be imparted to the organic systems of each, which

should diffuse their healthful influence throughout body and soul, and promote new vigor, manhood and strength! Yes, instead of weakness, weariness, and lassitude, did only love exist, not lust, and purity of intention, and were the marriage a true one, both the man and the woman would find an increased ability for all the functions and offices of life. But when so, the act would not be thought of at all from the mere animal nature, but would only be the gentle, unimpassioned tendency of the whole soul of love to ultimate itself in the body, for a mutual fulness and communion of being, while immediately *after* the act, more particularly, would be realized the interchange and coition of spirit, and the blending of both natures in that life which God hath designed. But let none take the advantage of these words for any immoderate or too frequent commerce, for I can assure them that humanity in general, at this day, is far too corrupt even to risk, to all eyes, the presentation of so much truth to their sight. I am writing for the pure-minded, and for those who wish to become so.

VIII.

LAWS OF HEREDITARY DESCENT, FACTS, ETC., ILLUSTRATIVE.

SPEAKING of the *preparation* of married partners for the holy act of child-begetting, I know not if I have yet conveyed sufficient truth, or with sufficient plainness and force. The subject is wrapped in so much delicacy to almost every mind — delicacy, I would remark, which comes from the evil state in which we all are — (for if we were simpler and purer, we could speak and write upon this subject with much more freedom) that it is difficult to meet all classes with the same style and illustrations. I wish to speak more particularly of a pure seed — a “holy seed,” as the Scriptures term it; for I am confident there is much truth here buried out of sight, which only needs to be presented in clear light, to beget new and deeper convictions, and possibly to influence some minds to a better practice. It is not new

truth which we here claim to present, but old truth newly and freshly communicated. Though I have no doubt, to many minds some portions of it will be new.

The prophet Malachi holds forth this language. Speaking of false and impure connections between husband and wife, he inquires — “And did not he [the Lord] make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed.” Chap. ii., v. 15. The meaning of which, in one sense, is evidently this. God created by his immediate Spirit and direct power, one man and one woman, or, if you please, in the very beginning, man and woman united — *Adam*, or *Man*. But wherefore only one? He could have created millions in the same way, speaking after the manner of men, as the literal sense always does, for He had the residue of the Spirit — all source and power and influence. Yet did He create only one. Why? That He might have a godly seed. That is, as each individual was to become the inheritor of a peculiar genius from his natural parentage, fitted, more than the primeval germ could fit him, for the performance of a particular use in the great family of man and in the

kingdom of angels above, so it was necessary that particular care be bestowed upon the seed -- that parents should be careful to preserve it holy, that God might be glorified, and man honored and uplifted in the long succession of an advancing race. Why, now, do we not pay more attention to it? Have we become so thoroughly sunk in worldliness and sensuality, that we care nothing at all for the children we bring into the world, — that we do not even make that a consideration in marriage, — that we unite for convenience, for wealth, for selfish indulgence, for love indeed so far as it can be made to accord with these things, but with the understanding that *one* thing must at all events be kept out of the mind; that is, the kind of children which we are to become instrumental in introducing to existence? I know that some among us are not so thoughtless, but with the multitude, this is the very curse and sin that we groan under and are guilty of. It *is* a sin; let it forever be so regarded; for “the chief reason why marriages are so holy, is that they are the seminaries of the human race; and inasmuch as the angelic heaven is from the human race, they are also the seminaries of heaven; consequently, by marriages not

only the earths, but also the heavens are filled with inhabitants." Let us, then, see the force of the prophet's announcement concerning a "godly seed." And pardon me if I grow a little impatient here; for I *cannot* contemplate this subject with complacency. Behold our inconsistency! See how lordly man lets himself down in comparison with the beasts! And if any argument were needed to set forth his own abasement, and to show the comparative estimate he places upon himself, let him find it here in the superior care and value he sets, in this respect, upon his cattle. For we acknowledge this principle and act upon it, in the rearing of our horses and oxen. The farmer might coax, and discipline, and train his cattle forever; if he did not improve the breed and proceed scientifically, he would only be laughed at. Why should not this hold true with human beings? And why should not clergymen say more about it? Have they not the authority of the Scriptures? What of the "godly seed," and of the "generation of vipers"?—of the "seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters"? What of the whole record of tribes and generations of men, to whom, according to their "seed," partic-

ular blessings or curses are awarded? Is not a large part of the whole Bible a record of God's doings by particular people, and "remnants," and beginnings of nations and families? Was not the servant of Abraham solemnly made to swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, not to take a wife for Isaac his son, of the daughters of the Canaanites, but to go into his own country, and to his kindred? And the special providence was put into requisition, of sending an angel with that servant, to secure the purpose, and to prosper his way. And Paul quotes a passage from Isaiah, saying — "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah." Why shall a clergyman, then — a teacher of holiness and the Scriptures, confine himself to conversions and spiritual influences after birth, and not step in here, at the sources and foundations of character, and unfold and enforce the most palpable, demonstrable, and radical laws of God and of salvation? Why not say — Behold the beasts of the field, how they grow. And is not a man better than a sheep? But oh, we have become so fashionably spiritual, that it doth not yet appear, that *human* intellect and morals de-

pend so much upon analogous causes as the intellect and good qualities of a horse. A cow, or a goose, must be improved in the stock; but a man, or a woman, let them marry as they will, "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, till death us do part," and that is as far as the church generally can see. A *second* birth — a purely disconnected, post-natal process, — that is about all it recognizes; and Christianity, which is law and philosophy throughout, when understood, and in the most intimate harmony with good hereditary physical and psychological conditions, is belittled and put out of sight, or its excellence in this respect turned entirely over to the brute creation!

We have spoken of a "godly seed;" let us now take an example from an ungodly one. And we will hit upon that one specimen of depravity — that one name, which has filled the world with horror, and at the very mention of which we seem to see a personification of all that is cruel and terrible. I mean the Emperor Nero, the monster of Roman antiquity. Here, the one condition of parentage which is essential to highest excellence seems to have been reversed. Instead of both parents contributing of their united virtues and

powers to produce the most perfect offspring, both contributed of conspicuous evil. And thus the record runs through a continued series of black and infamous lineage. "Julia, the daughter of Augustus Cæsar, and the great grandmother of Nero, was a woman of dissolute conduct, libidinous passions, and abandoned infamy. Her daughter Agrippina, possessed an uncontrollable and violent temper, and was insatiably ambitious of power. For her own aggrandizement she was ever ready to sacrifice the interests, or even the lives of her children. Her only redeemable quality was chastity; and, although Germanicus, 'the worthiest son of the worthiest parents,' was her husband, her children appear to have inherited her fierce disposition. Caligula, that emperor of Rome who wished the Roman people had but one neck, that he might, at a blow, destroy the whole race, was one of them, and Agrippina, of infamous memory, the mother of Nero, was another. The paternal grandfather of Nero was Lucius Domitius Ænobarbus, a man of impetuous temper, violent, proud, extravagant and cruel. The life of his son Cneius Domitius, was a series of evil deeds; he married his cousin Agrippina, and used to remark, 'that

from himself and Agrippina, nothing good or valuable could come.' They were the parents of Nero, whose name is now another word for the most savage cruelty."*

And so we might go on —

Tracing the poison through the human race,
And, where the accusations heaviest run,
Find some dark, fatal links, in that vast chain
Which mercy only dares to contemplate
Down to its fearful depths.

Justice may contemplate it too, but only such as is thoroughly impregnated with mercy, and from the results of which we may learn both our duty and our safety. Seeing in this clear light what the lineage is, we may as well practise upon the law of causation here, as in our calculations of material science, only more thoroughly and perfectly so, in proportion as the results are more important; but with not a jot of abatement from our most practical freedom.

The truth is, we do not realize the vast disproportion between the concerns of humanity in this direction, and the interests which we attach to almost any other subject of importance, the laws

* *Intellectual and Moral Qualities Transmissible.*

and conditions of which are equally evident. And it is not the delicacy of the subject alone; it is our absolute stolidity and unconsciousness, which keeps it out of the arena of popular discussion. How popular have we made almost every other subject! As has been well observed, we frequently have public meetings of our citizens in various parts of the country, to discuss the great interests of agriculture; and our State Houses and public halls will be open, and the governors and chief men called to preside, while information is furnished and truth diffused, and the people more scientifically instructed in the best methods of raising sheep, and oxen, and corn, and grass, and cabbages; but who ever heard of a meeting of this kind for the introduction of a new and better style of humanity? Not meetings for education merely, and rescue from the miseries of the generations that are born; but why not more *primitive* and *original* principles discussed? Why not the calling together of men, and women too, (for they may hold separate meetings if they choose) to earnestly consider and profoundly discuss, the marriage and parentage interest in all its relations? Mr. Combe well remarks, that if the same

amount of knowledge and care which has been taken to improve the domestic animals, had been bestowed upon the human species, during the last century, there would not have been so great a number of moral patients for the lunatic asylums and the prisons, as there are at present. Why not, then, the best science collected, and the most fundamental and radical wisdom presented and diffused throughout the community? I can imagine a meeting of this kind, of the most refined and beautiful order. If not in State Houses, or in public buildings, at first, in private halls and rooms where much could be said, and impressions made which could never be effaced, upon the hearts and minds of the fathers and mothers and young people of our land.

“Indeed,” says a writer on Intermarriage, Mr. Walker, of England, “it can be only passion, venality, or pride, that can prevent man from doing, for his own progeny, that which natural and universal laws permit him to do for the progeny of every domesticated animal. The only reply that, under these circumstances of actual and daily demonstration, he can make to the invitation of nature and science, is, that he prefers a blind passion to

an enlightened one,—brutal indulgence, succeeded by life-long disgust, to exquisite enjoyment and permanent happiness,—or money, a mere means of pleasure, at the cost of domestic misery—perhaps of conjugal or filial insanity, to actual pleasure for himself and all around him, as well as the progress of children in intellectual improvement and honorable arts—the sole means of abiding fortune,—or rank from which he may look up to those above, who despise and spit upon him because he would vainly overtake them in their idiot scramble for a bubble, or down on those below, who therefore naturally hate him for his insolent assumption.”

We shall institute practical measures, then, for this great object, of a kind and tendency proportioned to our faith and sincerity. And as to the means proposed above—popular discussions of this subject, it may not, I say, be made too public at first; the more delicate and private experiences may be made the subject of more private conference; mothers may come together, and fathers may come together, in separate meetings: but there is much pertaining to the subject of marriage in general, to its spiritual as well as its

physical relations, and a whole host of interesting and important facts relating to the state and condition of parents during the time preceding birth, which are so fatal and so wonderful, which may be preached or lectured on everywhere. And we make bold to say, until knowledge of this kind does get more popular, and men and women are disposed to act more nobly, with a reference to the peculiar honors and distinctions of humanity in this respect, above all other nature, the world will never realize the "millennium" so much spoken of, and will make but slow advances where it might make comparatively rapid marches, in the grand highway of human perfectibility. Human progress is slow, necessarily; but it need not be so stupidly and inhumanly slow.

Now, the truth here set forth may be recognized and admitted and adopted. But it may meet with the old objection that it is altogether premature, too early, too pure and high to be made practical with a generation of self-seekers, and a world swamped in earthliness, sensuality, and corruption. I am sorry to see so much truth in the objection. But all men are not fools, and some there are who always want to know the best and highest truths.

And therefore I say, say not that nothing can be done. I tell you much can be done. And it may be said of this as of all other subjects,—"They that have grace must be the salt of the earth." Every true man and every true woman who will only see and acknowledge so much as is here put forth, even though they do not and cannot, from their associations, practise the full extent of it, yet still if they favor it—if they speak for it—if they do any thing, be it ever so little, (yet how much more they can do than they think of!)—every such person, I say, may thus do *much* to shame this wretched practice and delinquency of a world lying in wickedness, and elevate to their proper height the sublimest principles of human improvement, loveliness and joy.

How, I am tempted to ask, is the world *ever* to rise to its proper heights of salvation and glory, without the adoption and practice of the main principle here set forth? We speak emphatically to the *Christian* world. This is what Dr. Bushnell calls "the out-populating power of the Christian stock." He devotes a most searching and admirable discourse to it. "Conversions from without," he says, "are to have their part in pre-

paring it, [the day of millennial glory] but the consummation hoped for is even impossible, as regards a third or fourth part of the race, save as it is reached by a populating process which enters them into life itself, through the gate of a sanctified infancy and childhood." Notice that word — "impossible."

Again, "whether the feeble and more abject races are going to be regenerated and raised up, is already very much of a question. What if it should be God's plan to people the world with better and finer material? Certain it is, whatever expectations we may indulge, that there is a tremendous overbearing surge of power in the Christian nations, which, if the others are not speedily raised to some vastly higher capacity, will inevitably submerge and bury them forever."

And what *is* this supposed plan in the mind of God, for the peopling of the world with better and finer material? Simply, what we have advocated and set forth in this little treatise. It is *to have the spiritual birth begun in the natural!* But let the Doctor speak for himself.

"Our only idea of [church] increase," he says, "is of that which accrues by means of a certain

abrupt technical experience. Led away thus from all thought of internal growth in the church, efforts to secure conversions take an external character, becoming gospel campaigns. Accretion displaces growth. The church is gathered as a foundling hospital; and lest it should not be such, its own children are reduced to foundlings. Immediate repentance proclaimed, insisted on, and realized in an abrupt change, proper only to those who are indeed aliens and enemies, is the only hope or inlet of the church. We cannot understand how the spiritual nation should grow and propagate, and become powerful within itself."

This is precisely the point in debate. And the only question is—how far can such an internal, spiritual-natural growth be carried, and what are the means in our control for the renovating of this whole process of natural generation by "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost"? Surely there can be *no end* to the improvements which may thus be inaugurated for the human race, and which may lay a foundation for education, refinement, spiritualization, glory and immortality, surpassing all our powers of present application, and all the preaching and activity

of Christendom. Shall we not, then, have a new age for humanity, founded in more primitive principles, in a higher respect for law, and the nature of the supernatural, in marriage, and in God's inevitable fate?

One more extract from the philosophic Doctor. "Consider a very important fact," says he, "in human physiology, which goes far to explain, or take away the strangeness and seeming extravagance of the truth I am endeavoring to establish, viz., that qualities of education, habit, feeling, and character, have a tendency always to grow in, by long continuance, and become thoroughly inbred in the stock. We meet humble analogies of this fact in the domestic animals. The operations to which they are trained, and in which they become naturalized by habit, become predispositions, in a degree, in their offspring; and they, in their turn, are as much more easily trained on that account. The next generation are trained still more easily, till what was first made habitual finally becomes functional in the stock, and almost no training is wanted. That which was inculcated by practice passes into a tendency, and descends as a natural

gift, or endowment. The same thing is observable, on a large scale, in the families of mankind."

Precisely so: and here we may notice only a few instances of how some particular intellectual trait has been distinctly traced in the offspring, as the result of habit or education in the parentage. "It has been observed," says Mr. Walker, the author on Intermarriage before quoted, "that the child of a civilized European will acquire knowledge more readily than the offspring of an American Savage; [as to so much, who could doubt!] while it is known that such offspring, though brought up from a very early age in the colleges of the United States, exhibit an almost irresistible desire to return to the forests, and recommence the wandering life. On the other hand, we are told that, in the voyage up the Missouri, by Clarke and Lewis, one of the company was the son of an Indian woman who had married a Frenchman, and that this half-Indian acquired the power of tracing animals through the trackless wood to any extent, — which his companions could not acquire.

"In a paper read to the Royal Society, by Mr. Knight, it was observed that, many years since, an old schoolmaster had told him, that in the course

of his personal experience, he had observed a remarkable difference in the capacities of children for learning, which was connected with the education and aptitude of their parents; that the children of people accustomed to arithmetic learned figures quicker than those of differently educated persons, while the children of classic scholars more easily learned Latin and Greek; and that, notwithstanding a few striking exceptions, the natural dullness of children born of uneducated parents was proverbial.

“Writing afterwards to Mr. Knight as to what appeared to be the striking and important applicabilities of his paper, he, in his reply, favored me with the following illustrative remark:—

“I, seventy years ago, heard an old schoolmaster remark, in speaking of my late brother’s great facility in learning languages, [the distinguished Mr. Payne Knight is here alluded to] that, in fifty years’ experience, he had never seen a child of wholly illiterate parentage and ancestry, (such being at that time very abundant) who could learn languages; meaning of course Latin and Greek.”

The above observations may meet with sceptical objections, when it is reflected how often it is that

very distinguished and literary men have sprung from obscure and uneducated parents. Instances are numerous in our own country, as every school-boy knows. And as to ancient times, says one, "we know that some of the greatest men in Greece were of the obscurest origin, and that foreign female slaves gave birth to many of them. A Carian was the mother of Themistocles; a Scythian was that of Demosthenes; and a Thracian gave birth to Iphicrates and Timotheus! On the other hand it is certain that the children of Socrates and Pericles were destined to stupidity and obscurity." Again, it is asked by Lewes, in his *Physiology of Common Life*, with reference to the supposed superiority of male parentage, — "How was the mighty intellect of Thucydides left to be represented by an idiotic Milesius, and a stupid Stephanus? Where was the great soul of Oliver Cromwell in his son Richard? Who were the inheritors of Henry IV. and Peter the Great? What were Shakspeare's children, and Milton's daughters? What was Addison's only son? an idiot."

But these apparent exceptions to a general law have been contemplated all along from the beginning. They are generally accounted for by the

circumstance that only *one* of the parents has been distinguished for greatness, or proficiency in any one thing, while the other was of feeble or common intellect—it may have been either the father or the mother. But where both parents have been thus distinguished, if there have been no modifying or obstructing causes, which there always are, to some extent, then the result in the offspring is found to be in consonance with a regular law. The complications in the ancestry, and the particular modifying causes, are so numerous as to make it impossible to trace the whole of any one case, much less all cases. But the facts are so numerous, and so directly traced, than no one of any fair, extended, and impartial observation, (Mr. Thomas Buckle to the contrary notwithstanding !) will doubt the law, while the apparent exceptions to it may all be accounted for by counteracting causes in one or both of the parents, and sometimes several generations back in the ancestry. For there are apparent leaps, sometimes, of superior or inferior qualities, which have disappeared in one generation, but will make their appearance two or three or four generations afterwards. These, with the supernatural causes before alluded to, will be suffi-

cient in general to account for all anomalies. Take the following one fact, and how far does it go towards removing all the arguments drawn from the apparent exceptions! "The most striking example known to us," says Lewes, "is that of the family which boasted Jean Sebastian Bach as the culminating illustration of a musical genius, which, more or less, was distributed over *three hundred* Bachs, the children of very various mothers." But why spend time to refute an objection which every farmer knows is reduced to nothing by the observations and experiments amongst his own stock?

And so of moral and spiritual qualities, which, as Dr. Bushnell truly says, by inference from the habits of trained animals, from being "inculcated by practice, pass into a tendency, and descend as a natural gift, or endowment." It is wonderful, too, how quick the transmission may be made. "Certain it is," says Walker, "that families, by intermarriages founded on rational principles, and in conformity with the natural laws so clearly established, as prevailing equally among men and lower animals, may, surely, easily, and quickly, (some in the first, others in their second generation) raise

themselves, in some at least of their members, from deformity to beautiful organization, from disease to health, and from stupidity to high mental ability." — "A lady with whom I was acquainted," says another writer, "and who possessed great wealth, passed her nights in gaming: she died young from pulmonary disease. Her eldest son was equally addicted to play, and he also died of consumption at the same age as his mother. His daughter inherited the same passion and the same disease."

Here we may remark, too, how long the qualities so transmitted continue to perpetuate themselves. They are very easily and quickly transmitted, but how long they last! "We know," says Haller, "a very remarkable instance of two noble females, who got husbands on account of their wealth, although they were nearly idiots, and from whom this mental defect has extended for a *century* into several families, so that some of all their descendants still continue idiots in the fourth and even in the fifth generation."

But we might fill a large volume with cases illustrative; we have probably given enough. How evident it is that both the intellectual, and

the moral and spiritual qualities, are transmissible by an easy and even a quick descent; and what an argument may be drawn from this for the tremendous responsibility that rests upon us to see to this more fully, and not fritter away our efforts at reform and regeneration by *mere* "gospel campaigning," to the neglect of building up the spiritual nation from within, by propagation from a "godly seed"! Why will we not realize that all our habits—all our every-day practice—a thousand moods and influences which we suffer to affect us, become inwoven into the texture and substance of the life of those who are dependent upon us for their existence, especially when that experience is predominant in any kind during the period between conception and birth? They may be very easily generated into us, and in a very short time; but if they are bad, they are very hard to regenerate out of us, and require years of suffering and trial. I am the father of four children. And I can see, in every one of them, (if I make any exception it is of him who passed so early into the spiritual world that his particular traits were not fully developed) the peculiar character stamped upon them—organized into them,

from the states and influences and circumstances which were operative with the parents at the time of conception, and during the whole period of gestation. The record of these peculiarities from similar causes in other families is too common to enlarge upon.

IX.

OTHER FACTS, MARRIAGE, PARENTAGE, ETC.

THERE are other facts which may be adduced for the illustration of the same general principle. I refer now to illegitimate children, and to the marrying of cousins and near relatives. It is a common observation that children born out of wedlock are frequently remarkable for their brightness. They are not particularly distinguished for good morals, (yet sometimes they may be) but they have frequently a bright, quick turn, and are apt to be gay, buoyant, quick-witted, and active. What is the reason? What but the fact that their dishonored parentage had at least one advantage over that of many who are more correct in morals, but who drag themselves to stupidity by over-indulgence and many enervating habits, and in that state go stumbling and blundering to the act of procreation? Or they contract a habit of such indifference to the whole married state—it is

such a complete bog and flaccidity to them, that the active powers they put forth have nothing frequently of the soul in them; it is mere bodily habit; and their offspring are distinguished for the same dull qualities. Whereas, in the illegitimate child we may see frequently the effects of such gladness, sprightliness, and exhilaration, as entered into that forbidden compact. The only argument to be drawn from this is — let the good that is in the evil speak to the evil that is in the good. And how many such lessons may be learned from the “children of this world”!

“Being with a friend, about thirty years ago,” says Mr. Knight, as quoted by Walker, “shooting grouse upon a Welsh Mountain, we were joined by a native of the country, who exhibited, with the manners and character of a buffoon, very great powers of combining ideas, and who possessed a good deal of a kind of irregular and uninstructed wit. I pointed out to my friend the difference between him and the other peasants, and observed that, on inquiry, he would prove to be the son of an educated male parent. It proved, upon inquiring, that he was a gentleman’s bastard.

“Being in my parish church, about ten years

ago, a little girl, in repeating her catechism, got through her part in less than half the time that her companions did, and without missing, or hesitating about, a single word. She was wholly unknown to me; but I whispered to Mrs. Knight, 'That girl is a gentleman's *natural daughter*'; [as illegitimate children were then called] and so she proved to be."

It is probable also, that the exercise of intellect and tact, quite active in the guilty parties on such occasions, to avoid exposure, to prevent jealousy, and to carry out their secret intentions with success and adroitness, in addition to more powerful love, tends to the quickening of this species of intellect in such offspring. The whole of which may be turned to an argument for virtue, by any who choose to reverse the process.

In the marriage of cousins, and other near relatives, we have another illustration of the potent alchemy of matrimonial unions. The fact of the imbecility, insanity, or eccentricity of the children of such connections, is universally recognized—with many exceptions. Still the result is so conspicuous as to reveal a law here, though many cannot tell the precise nature of the law, or what

is the philosophy of so melancholy a result. The simple truth is, in these cases, there is *too much of one thing*. There is not sufficient variety of spiritual and physical substance, powers and faculties of mind, sentiments and affections of the moral nature, to produce a strong and healthy organism. Power and amplitude is made up of variety in unity. The uniting of too similar substances does not produce strength and efficiency, like the union of many and various, when they are susceptible of that union. This may be partly illustrated by confining any person, for a long period of time, to the performance of only one thing, which, though it may tend to perfection in that thing, yet will reduce his general ability, and enfeeble him with monotony. But in the sexual union of such qualities, the effect is paralyzing to the whole nature, because the whole nature is concerned in it. There may indeed be, sometimes, (very rarely, however, we suspect) a tendency to an abnormal preponderance or over-activity in some one particular faculty, but if so, it is only such as is morbid and of the nature of disorder, as in prodigies frequently, who are oftentimes produced from an over-strain, or great intensity of application by one

or both of the parents at the time of conception or gestation. But when so, the distinction of faculty or genius is not apt to last. It will be all outgrown or overgrown in the course, sometimes, of a very few years. Those examples of superior or wonderful development which endure, and continue to characterize the person through life, are such as have been produced, not by some mere temporary intensity of action in the parentage, but where greatness of character, and full, normal strength of organic development, and intensity too, perhaps, have all existed to produce their corresponding result.

It may be remarked too, that it is not cousins and near relatives alone, who thus exemplify this law, and are punished with imbecility in the offspring. Any persons, whether blood relatives or not, who are too similar in their mental qualities, will produce the same results. Cases are well known of this kind, thus demonstrating the universality and inevitability of the law, and showing the high moral and matrimonial importance of the whole subject. On the same principle, there may be many cases of such family relationship where the parties are *sufficiently different* to enter into

the marriage union without any evil results of the nature alluded to. So that there may be exceptions to this, as to almost every other rule; while at the same time, at the bottom, there is operative a principle of truth. There may be yet other causes operating in the marriage of these family connections, the nature of which we are not yet fully acquainted with. The simple fact is, however, as it appears to us, there is not difference, not variety enough, in such cases, ordinarily speaking, necessary to excitement and the reproductive power. Man naturally seeks, in companionship and in all friendship, not only for qualities similar enough to his own to attract him by the necessary sympathy, and inspire confidence; but for something different, something new, which is capable of exciting him. And it is well remarked, that "this conforms to the fundamental difference of the sexes." Where this law is in action between two beings conjoined in matrimony, there is of necessity more stimulus, more love, and it is observed that where such qualities exist, marriages are generally more prolific.

It is no detraction from the force of this position, that *similarity* of character, tastes, and tendencies,

is necessary to a proper and happy marriage. *Some* similarity of course there must be, in order either to happiness or productiveness. And, therefore, when we announce, as we frequently do, the law of "opposites" for marriage, it is to be understood that opposites are not necessarily contraries. We don't want *contrary* qualities and dispositions united in marriage, for these make jargon and all strife. But there are certain opposites, in intellect and in tastes, which inspire mutual love and esteem. These draw from each other, and reciprocate mutually what either alone has not. The reader may easily fancy the particulars, to illustrate, and suit himself. I will mention but one illustration in principle. The two positive or the two negative poles of two magnets are contraries, and they repel each other. But the positive and the negative are opposites, and they attract and unite!

Concerning the too great sameness of qualities in near relatives and others, nothing can be more melancholy than the history of the royal families and ancient dynasties of the old world. They invariably tend to imbecility and insanity, and are the loudest protestations to heaven against this violation of the laws of Nature. Such instances,

for example, as George III., Paul of Russia, the late sovereigns of Denmark and Portugal, the deposed king of Sweden, &c., and, as it has been remarked, "a fourth or fifth of the kings then occupying the thrones of Europe! and consequently a proportion of mental disease far greater than can be exemplified in any rank of society."

"The marriages of high rank and of hereditary wealth," says Sir Anthony Carlisle, "are generally concocted in their muniment-rooms, where the estates of heirs and heiresses are entailed, together with the personal peculiarities, moral defects, and hereditary diseases of each family, and perpetuated as far as law, sheep-skins, signings and seals can extend them. Hence the frequent termination of such inbred races; while, in every ancient village, of considerable, though not shifting population, the names of humble families have continued for more ages, although ill recorded, than those of the proudest gentry."

Now, shall we not, in our free and democratic America, avoid, as it becomes us, the sin of similar violations of the laws and conditions under which we are living? What can be more honorable, or more worthy of rational human beings, than to

strive for that permanency in all that pertains to true and dignified happiness, intellectual and moral improvement, in the arts and conveniences and uses of elegant and civilized life, — that abiding fortune in families and lineage, and that marked respect which is always conferred upon such distinction, which is only secured by obedience to these fundamental laws? And does it not all point to the one principal thing which should be uppermost in the minds of all who are contemplating any connection of this nature? — I mean the special sanctity of a true and proper marriage. But, on the other hand, marriage that is *not* proper — marriage that is rushed into with the indifference of animals, or thoughtless, worldly-minded men and women, — there are not words to express the sin and guilt, and enduring consequences of the act to unborn millions.

And why shall we not, let me ask, on the score of mere enjoyment to *ourselves* — for the conscious and noble satisfaction derived to wedded life from an interesting and beautiful family of *children*, think more of the character of those partners which we take into this holy alliance? It is not all of married joy to reciprocate the love and com-

panionship of the one chosen out of all the world to share with us life's destiny. Indeed, that happiness is frequently and grossly marred by those offshoots of the conjugal union which spring up around us in the house, and are the perpetual attendants of the family circle. And who has not frequently been shocked, and sometimes where he least expected it, at the combination of fearful elements existing in half a dozen little representatives of domestic life and endearment? How unlike the vision which once early dawned upon the youthful pair! How very dissimilar to the scenes of bliss sometimes foreshadowed as of heaven's own likeness! These children are just as likely to be little, ungovernable pests of passion and ill-temper, surly, spiteful, daringly disobedient and hateful, as they are to be lovely, amiable, beautiful in spirit as in body. All this difference may come of the different character of her or him you take to your bosom. Talk not of education now. I acknowledge it in all its force. But we are here looking at other truths. Now I say, who can help admiring, and almost adoring, such a family of children as is sometimes presented to our view? "*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia*"—the greatest

reverence is due to childhood — sang the Roman poet Juvenal two thousand years ago ; and surely, in the present light of an advanced and spiritual Christianity, the sentiment is none the less beautiful, and none the less touching to our finer and higher sensibilities. How beautifully the work of education goes on in such a family ! And when we view all the natural qualities — the loveliness, the amiability, the innocence, the ready respect and honor manifested for the parents, the aptitude to learn, and the Christian graces and accomplishments that have been so felicitously grafted upon such a stock, what a benediction it is, and how large a portion of the happiness of married life it is — such a circle of beautiful attendants ! I have in my mind now, more than one family of children who have excited my almost envious admiration, and whom, all unknown to them or the parents, I have remembered with secret blessings ever since I have known them. The God of heaven be praised, that so abundant a spring of heavenly felicity is yet left upon this poor earth of ours !

And now, O man ! will you not think of this in your youthful matrimonial alliances ? O woman ! remember that it is not *him* alone, whom you have

honored with your love,—it is not this, nor all that can grow out of it, which constitutes by far the all of conjugal felicity. Your fireside is to be blessed with the choicest benedictions of heaven. Your table is to be surrounded with images and patterns of yourselves. Your whole life, for twenty, thirty, forty years, is to be influenced very largely by the children you have brought into the world. Sooner or later the married partners must be severed. Still the children may survive. They may bless you in loneliness and in your declining years, or they may be a weight upon your spirit little accordant with your hopes or desires. And the fate of those children too, for time and eternity,—why will you not think of it, nor ever dream of separating it from the all-important consideration of Marriage?

Here let a remark be made from common observation. It is observed that, in a general way, in common society, men frequently marry from the love of sex, and too often from mere natural excitement; and girls marry from social influence (not so much, at least, from the love of sex), from the dread of a single life, for protection, for a home, from love of approbation, ambition, &c. The

thought of parentage is pretty much out of the minds of each. It is even distasteful, at times. They dread the trouble of it — would be glad to get rid of it. And how often do they take special pains to do so! Now, the time is coming when this matter will be very much changed. The idea of parentage will become prominent. It will be thought of with great solemnity. And it is for this purpose that I write, that I may contribute something to this great end. Parentage? children? why! what dread incubus from the infernal regions can have arisen, to quench this thought from the minds of human beings? I repeat, the time is coming when this subject will be thought of with *great solemnity*, and when it cannot and shall not be shut out from the contemplation of the youthful candidates, nor the actual participants, of matrimony.

Since writing the above, we have received a letter from a spiritual friend in Indiana, touching upon this very subject, from which we make the following extract.

“I wish to make a suggestion in reference to your new work, which, if thorough on the subject, will be a most important one. Pre-natal conditions

are really the most vital to the character of offspring, as I know by much experience. But there is a crime against *nature* almost universally prevalent in this country, which I have ever regarded with the greatest abhorrence, and that is, the systematic effort to avoid having children — the destroying, at the outset, the good natural use of marriage, and of course destroying in a corresponding degree the spiritual use.

“Selfabuse and legal prostitution lie at the root of the feeble natural and moral constitutions of children. The natural character of the child is determined by the condition of the parents at the time of coition, when conception takes place [see, however, page 127]; and although the *germ vessel* is from the father, yet its *form* (which is the recipient of the soul) is doubtless modified by the female influences over him. Now, if one or both are just calculating and figuring for the purpose of gratifying their lust, without looking at all to the legitimate ends of marriage, what but feeble constitutions and perverted proclivities can be given to the offspring? And what is marriage but legal prostitution when entered into with a

view to sexual intercourse, without any regard to the high and holy uses of marriage?

“Do probe this damning sin to the quick! Staid New England is full of it. Sometimes I think it has been permitted by the Divine Providence in order to root out this excitable, money-getting, godless generation from the earth; and it is fast doing its work.”

Verily, verily. And in precise proportion to this unnatural aversion to having children, do those children, when by any considered ill luck they *are* born, bring with them into the world, as before observed more particularly, the same preponderance of mere lust with which they were begotten, the same predominance of the whole animal nature and the absence of all that is spiritual, perhaps the same hatred of life which the parents cherished towards them before they were born, and a thousand morbid feelings of disgust, and melancholy, and tiresomeness, for all that would otherwise sweeten existence, and create joy and thankfulness of spirit. Let it be remembered; let it be shunned!

X.

DESTINY AND THE HUMAN WILL.

I LOVE to speak of Destiny, but I love also to speak of destiny that we can control. In fact, there is no destiny, like this we are speaking of, that our agency does not form a part of. The two are wonderfully united in God's perfect plan. And so I apply it to this subject as to all others. Take it on any ground,—the idea of the extremest fate, or the absurdest exaggeration of free-will, it all becomes practical to him who comprehends his real duties. He is not troubled either with one extreme or the other. He unites them both, or forgets them both, in the one over-mastering thought of duty. We can listen, then, to such expressions of truth as the following, with pleasure and complacency. We may even profit by them if we consider them aright. How practical they are, and how admonishing!

“We may,” (says a good observer—Hazlitt, I

believe,) "with instruction and opportunity, mend our manners, or else alter them for the worse, 'as the flesh and fortune shall serve'; but the character, the internal, original bias, remains always the same, true to itself to the very last —

'And feels the ruling passion strong in death!'

The greater or less degree of animal spirits — of nervous irritability — the complexion of the blood — the proportion of 'hot, cold, moist, and dry, four champions fierce that strive for mastery' — the Saturnine and the Mercurial — the disposition to be affected by objects near, or at a distance, or not at all — to be struck with novelty, or to brood over deep-seated impressions — to indulge in laughter or in tears — the leaven of passion or of prudence that tempers this frail clay, is born with us, and never quits us. In this sense, 'the child's the father of the man,' sure enough. The color of our lives is woven into the fatal thread at our births; our original sins and our redeeming graces are infused into us; nor is the bond that confirms our destiny ever cancelled.

'Beneath the hills, amid the flowery groves,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.'

The 'winged wounds' that rankle in our breasts to our latest day, were planted there long since, ticketed and labelled on the outside, in small but indelible characters, written in our blood."

But this, I say, is destiny connected very largely with our agency. Nor is it at all discouraging to human virtue to be told that, either way — in the right or in the wrong, if we once set ourselves fairly in the road, Nature assists us by this powerful league with her fatality. All good calculators, everywhere, in every thing, only succeed by availing themselves of this sure and inevitable connection of the chain of human events. We would not break it for all the theories in the world.

There is one fact, however, that may be noticed here, and that is, the relation that the exertion of our own will bears to this seeming hereditary fatality. It is sometimes said that notwithstanding all the difference in the natural gifts of men, by which some are elevated to eminence and others kept in obscurity, or some tend to vice and others to virtue, it is, after all, the indomitable *will* and *industry* that some men exhibit, that gains for them their distinction. And so it is; this is the secret of many a fortune, and many a celebrity,

even with moderate talents; while very great talents without this will frequently turn out but splendid failures, exciting the pity of every beholder. And how often it is the candid confession of men of extensive reputation for genius and talent, that, if they have accomplished any thing worthy of this laudation, it is their persistent industry and application, and use of every moment of time, and not any genius that they are conscious of, which has wrought these wonders and given them their fame.

But is it not strange that it no more frequently occurs to our minds, that this will, and power and disposition to apply one's self, is *itself* a talent, and as often conferred at birth as any other gift? Is it supposable that the great and indomitable will of Bonaparte, or Luther, or Gen. Grant, or Andrew Jackson, was a thing of entire and voluntary origin with them? Or that our great scholars who achieve so much by patience, and perseverance, and unflagging industry,—Parker, for instance, or Prescott, or Everett, or Agassiz,—that their will and energy was not as much born in them as any other talent they possess? Much may have been acquired: we do not dispute this: all we

say is, as much may be inherited as the starting point of that acquisition, as of any other faculty. True it is, that one, at least, of the very celebrities here mentioned is said to have struggled all his lifetime against an inactive disposition, or an aversion to work. But it seems the work came, and the will prevailed! Now, I am no metaphysician to deny, or even to disparage, our most divine and distinguished faculty — free moral and intellectual agency, as to all its practical and substantial reality; and without getting at all at loggerheads here with the philosophers or the divines, because there is no need of it, I affirm that, in so much as the hereditary *is* concerned — in so much as our will is a fact at all, of any kind, it is oftentimes the *chief* talent — the chief genius that the man by birth inherits! A tremendous will is *born in him*. And it fires up all the other faculties, and puts them in motion. Why — if we should go into a philosophy here as to what the will itself in reality is, we should find it was made up very largely of those very faculties, — that each of them — each intellectual and moral and affectional power of the soul was *itself* a will — and they all combine in so many little wills to help make one

great one, to urge the man on to the gratification of the whole nature. Is there such a thing in man as a *will*—a thing not connected with any other faculty or feeling at all, only by proximity, whose office and function it is to say, go here, go there, don't do it, do it, go on, stop? If there is, we have not discovered it; and should it at any time appear, it would undoubtedly be more *like* Will-o'-the-wisp, only not so luminous, than any other imaginary thing! The will, as we see it, is the tendency of all the faculties, sentiments, and affections of the mind, singly or combined, wholly or in part, to exert themselves. And it is stronger or weaker, according as these faculties, sentiments, and affections are greater or less, quicker or slower by the temperament. True, the moral and affectional nature is more generally spoken of as the seat of the will, and the great impelling powers are really there; and this higher nature can sometimes control the lower with a will of superior power. It could always, were our nature in its true order. But there is a will of intellect as well as of heart; of reason and mathematics, as of vice or virtue; of poetry as well as feasting: and the intellectual faculties are so

strong and active that we might imagine them to *will themselves* into action, without any moral or affectional nature attached to them, could they so exist: but the "*will*" — that little or big thing which metaphysicians and common people so frequently *call* the will, which is not any of these, but something that speaks to all these with the authority of a master, is nowhere to be found!*

Now, therefore, speaking of hereditary qualities only, how absurd it is to say that a man is not so much dependent, for his success, on these, as on the will he puts forth of himself, his industry, perseverance, &c. ! For the truth is, these are qualities as much from the hereditary as any talent he is gifted with. And the more talents he inherits — the greater mass of brain and spirit he is born with, the more will he has, for the will is made up of *all* this. True, he may not inherit so much of a particular *part* of the brain, or of the propelling and affectional nature, and so not be distinguished

* Commonly speaking, I know that the human soul is made up of Will and Understanding; that the whole of the understanding is a thing separate from the whole of the will; and that the intellect of man receives its fire and energy from the affections flowing into it: but that alters not the main position taken above, as the will, even in this sense, is made up of several different and specific sentiments and affections, and the above illustration remains substantially true.

for much of what we generally call will. That would be his misfortune. But then he might be just as likely to inherit *more* of that particular nature. This would be his gain. The simple truth is, *whatever* is the character of his will, it is as much of a talent that he can be born with as any other gift of genius; and hence the immense importance of our whole subject, even with reference to that which is so apt to be thought not to belong to it at all. It belongs to it pre-eminently! and consecrates and gives activity to all the genius and talent we possess.

XI.

PHILOSOPHY OF MORAL AND SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE.

LET us now turn again, for a few moments, to the subject of organization in the spirit and body of man. We said in the commencement of this treatise, that probably it was generally assented to now, by rational thinkers on this subject, that the spirit, being substantial, must have some form and organism. We shall proceed here upon this assumption. And now concerning that organism as it affects our moral and religious characters. Moral and spiritual influence is a matter which is on everybody's lips, but few are disposed to inquire into its psychological conditions. Let us look a little more closely to it. And let us speak in all simplicity, not as to metaphysicians, but to plain, common men and women. Is there an emotion, moral feeling, or impulse, stirred in the heart of man by any outward influence, say by reading or

by preaching, which does not take effect in the very *substance* of the soul? What *is* moral feeling? It is a felt motion or action, more or less correct and harmonious, as the fine particles of that substance vibrate or move thus in the soul. What is a thought? It is the action of that substance as it is influenced either from within or without, by some exciting cause, and forms a picture or impress of whatever the subject may be, in itself. I go not into particulars of mental philosophy, for it is not needed. I only avoid the nothingisms of the popular abstractionists by giving to every thing a substance and a form. Now I say, when we speak to each other, and excite each other's thoughts and feelings, that mental movement is wholly dependent on the substantial stuff that glows and trembles within. Clairvoyants will tell you that there is distinctly visible, when two persons are thus in contact, or when a whole assembly is addressed by one man, an absolute flux and reflux of living particles, as of electricity or magnetism. It *cannot* be all of the body. "It certainly is agreeable to reason," says Lord Bacon, "that there are some light effluxions from spirit to spirit, when men are in presence one with another,

as well as from body to body." — "Sympathies and antipathies," says Swedenborg, "are nothing else than exhalations of affections from minds which affect one another, according to similitudes, and excite aversion according to dissimilitudes. These, although they are innumerable, and are not sensibly perceived by any sense of the body, are yet perceived by the sense of the soul as one." According to this very rational account, let it now be observed that every such excitement or motion of the fine substance thus moved, directly alters, in some degree, the relative position of the particles. And this is moral influence! This is mental action in general. This is the effect of eloquence, preaching, or strong appeals of any kind, which move the heart and fire the brain, and produce conviction and conversion. I do not say that the substance which so acts is all in the individual soul or souls; of course there is an influx from extraneous and divine sources; but I say, unless there is some such action in the soul, there is *no way at all* of accounting for mental movement and change. We cannot think a thought, or feel an emotion, ever so slight, without changing, in some imperceptible degree, the very particles

which are submitted to this vibration. Take a familiar instance even from material instruments. Ole Bull once took great pains to procure some pieces of the wood of an old violin which had been long in use, with which to mend his own. He assigned as the reason, that the very vibrations of many years' playing had altered the character or susceptibility of the wood. It was better than any new, or any old which had not been submitted to this influence. It had probably acquired, in the internals of its fibrous structure, some musical or harmonious arrangement of its particles. Or at least, to come down to the crudest capacity, it was more like a violin than though it had been used for a meat-axe; and the great musician had some correct instinct in so regarding it.

It is just so with the human brain, and of the more *interior* human brain, or spirit. Preaching, or talking, or giving good lessons, moves this fine substance which constitutes the spiritual organ of thought and feeling, by somewhat of *influx* from the person who addresses, and by other spiritual and material agencies connected with the parties; and if continued, persevered in, in the right way, the effect must be lasting and beneficial. It is just

like bending an elastic rod: keep bending it, and it will stay bent. And so many people are reformed by purely moral influence. And hence, by the way, it is oftentimes *so hard* to change a man's opinions, or produce any considerable effect upon him. His mind is *formed*. All its little vesicles are substantially fixed and set in a particular direction against you. It is like so many cups or receivers all turned the wrong way, and he can get nothing from you. Or, it is like buckets upside-down when it rains! Such a man is not open to influx, or influence as we call it, and in order to change him you have got to alter the *forms of his mind*. And this frequently is a long, hard work. Other men, more flexible, pliant, susceptible, may receive impressions more readily, and undergo changes more rapidly. "Clay in the hands of the potter," sure enough. Not only the more fixed substances of the mind, but the fine circulating spiritual fluids, we may conceive to have acquired a different motion from repeated application and addresses. This, I say, is moral influence. I do not overlook the Spirit of God. That operates in the same way. It is literally "poured out" — not from the skies down through the natural air.

but from the Divine Mind, in an interior way, to the souls of men — upon all who will receive it. And there are *no* influences so refined and unsubstantial as to amount to the vacuum of popular theology.

Said Edward Everett, speaking of the alliance of the corporeal and spiritual principles of man, — “I do not know whether the pure, ethereal essence itself (at least so far as we can comprehend it, which is but faintly) ought more to excite our admiration, than this most wondrous compound of spirit and matter.” But what if it should turn out that this most wondrous compound of spirit and matter is but a complication — a union by degree, (degrees, however, far different from what we crudely consider them) of the two extremes of one only original substance? Such a union *could* not exist unless there was a secret and powerful affinity in essence and in nature. But although thus united, they are still so different, in their acquirements and capabilities, that one can drop by death into the grave, and the other ascend to immortality.*

* It seems necessary to say here, in reference to this much contemplated and unsettled subject, that, although as observed at the commencement

From the whole, we may acquire some better idea of the supreme importance of good organic conditions in the soul and body. If the soul is an

of this volume, matter is to be thought of as proceeding from God by "discrete" degrees, yet there cannot properly be said to be a *time* when it did not exist. From all past eternity, to our most rational conception, the Deity is to be thought of as having an external, material envelope, so to speak, though without any attempt on our part to define that substance, or to compare it with anything that we in our present state are familiar with, because we know that matter is capable of existing under many different conditions. But a certain material envelope, or external body, it seems there must have been, else we are reduced to the absurdity of supposing that, on a time, matter was produced as an outbirth from pure spirit, — which of course would leave the Deity so much less in quantity! The resort to infinity does not remedy the matter in the least; it only beclouds it. The idea of diminished quantity will enter into our conceptions in just that proportion that we say matter, in time, was discreted from spirit. If we say that it was not discreted, but that Deity had power to originate it in some marvellous manner from his own spiritual substance as a groundwork, without, however, subtracting any portion from Himself, then I say, in just the proportion that the marvel operated, or in just that extent in which a substance was produced which was *more* than existed before, though in ever so different form and quality, does this present the absurd idea that it was created from nothing. Now, the truer and more rational conception is, that there never was a time when matter did not exist in some condition, as the body of God, if you please, of which He is the soul. But still the substance is to be conceived of as existing *from* God, permeated by his life and motion, eternally upheld and sustained by Him, so that the discretizing process is not to be thought of as ever commenced in time, but as an order of existence from eternity. Then the *creation* of matter and of material objects will simply be a process of *formation*. And although spirit and matter are still so unlike, yet they may be thought of as one substance, in discrete separation,

organic entity, we understand something of *how* good or bad qualities are transmissible, and may be inherited from parentage and ancestry. If it is not organic, although we may believe, we can understand nothing about it. We may inherit a peculiar organism of soul as well as of body; and we can see how the spiritual qualities can stick there: but how an unsubstantial, formless nothing, or next to nothing, can obtain any permanent foothold in a man's character, we cannot see with our most powerful glasses. It is altogether too much like the ghost in Hamlet, when he would strike at him — "He is here, he is here, he is gone"!

In this fine alchemy, too, between the soul and

from eternity to eternity. Here we see the truth that there is in Dualism, and here we avoid the error also of those philosophers who so exaggerate that conception as to speak of a kingdom of life and a kingdom of death from all past eternity. It is all one, pervaded with life, as the soul and body of Divinity. And we mistake much if the origin of what we call evil may not be found in the simple *re-action* of one of these extreme substances against the other, in the necessary divine efforts to refine, beautify, and amplify the creation. Of course, when this re-action comes to exist in man, it assumes a higher, more complex, and moral form, but it is capable of being systematized and harmonized.

For a much fuller illustration of this subject, but with some imperfections here corrected, see the author's work — "God in his Providence," in the chapter entitled "The Connection of God with Nature."

body, to improve the one is evidently to improve the other. A pure spirit purifies even the body, by dispersing many gross and offensive particles not in harmony with it; and a pure and vigorous and healthy body certainly gives release and freedom to the spirit's energies, if it does not contribute to the purity of the soul itself. But there is so much depending upon the original germ, that all post-natal influences, whether moral or physical, are very much determined by it. Even the air, light, electricity, water, food, dress, exercise, act differently upon what is first made differently. You cannot magnetize an animal as you can a man — a gross subject as you can a fine one. Preaching and teaching do great good; but all talk and reading only make their comparatively slight impressions upon an organism that has gone before it. Preaching itself is the expression of an organism. And it is high or low, truthful or false, successful or unsuccessful, according as the preacher has received his organic structure and quality from his parentage and ancestry. All spiritual influences are limited and confined within this channel and its subsequent improvements.

XII.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS.

FINALLY, what we want, in this age of the world, is a comprehensive combination of all truth, so far as it is known, for the elevation and salvation of man. We must not look to the soul alone without the body, nor to the body alone without the soul. We must seek ends from beginnings, and beginnings from ends. Science itself must become divine, and the long looked for union between theology and philosophy, faith and reason, be hastened by every effort of the friends of either towards the approaching nuptials of the royal pair. The magic circle of all art, science, knowledge, virtue, and holy mystery of religion, must be recognized as perfect, eternal, ever revolving, connected and connecting at all its points, and expanding unbroken forever. We must conceive clearly, speak plainly, and carry our efforts for human amelioration to the causes, essences, and first principles of things. And the most fruitful

of all fields of human improvement, if only some self-sacrificing disciples could be found more effectually to enter it,—the very Holy of holies, where God and Nature's high priest stands in his most sacred and effectual office, is MARRIAGE. Here, around this holy altar, centre earth, time, eternity. There is nothing so radical, either in good or evil, as the deeds committed here, and no salvation after this, but which is limited and conditioned, sometimes in a most melancholy manner, by what is marred and lost at birth.

But notice that all this is spoken comparatively. Education does wonders, especially if begun early with the infant. Regeneration does more. Their combined influence may alter, in the most marked manner, the form and shape of the brain, improve the quality, and increase the volume of it. And of course the mind also that is within it. The whole soul may grow and improve by it. But this, I have said, may be done with the finest and best formations as well as the worst: and, all other circumstances being equal, all advantages and opportunities, it would invariably be found that those who received the best start at birth would *continue* in advance: and we have reason to believe,

therefore, that in the spiritual spheres, where the social and circumstantial inequalities incident to the present life exist no longer, the obscure geniuses and the best intrinsic specimens of human nature will break forth and shine by a necessity that is in them, — will outreach those who have received but ordinary organizations, and who are dependent, for their superiority here, mainly on education and circumstances ; and it is, therefore, pre-eminently practical to observe and enforce these fundamental laws and principles of our whole being.

Indeed, while we would not at all disparage the old distinction between “the children of nature and the children of grace,” and while we are disposed to run a very orthodox line between the predominantly selfish on the one hand and the predominantly unselfish on the other, and thus, among infinite grades and degrees of character which *seem* to allow of no such division — which *seem* to embrace all mankind in one promiscuous mass, still to recognize the scriptural division into two great classes — the sheep and the goats, the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad ; — while, I say, we see this in the *predominating* tendencies

of mankind, though all are in more or less mixed states so long as they live in this world; and while there may be at least a *temporary* completing and finishing of this characterization in the world to come; yet at the same time, taking a surface view of humanity, what do we see? We see, even allowing much partial work of regeneration, that the *chief* difference among the masses of men is not what education and regeneration have made, but what natural first birth has made, — qualified and modified, I allow, by what the Spirit has transmitted, through the ages, of the new and second birth *into* the first, so that both are in a measure identified as the same. The most cursory view of humanity need only to be taken to confirm this. If one man or woman is prominent for traits that arrest quick attention, and strike every beholder — if one, for instance, is pleasant and attractive in manners, of open, smiling countenance, and another is stern, cold, unsmiling and unsocial; if one is irritable, quick-tempered, fretful and passionate, and another quiet, smooth, and generally unruffled; if one is sour and morose, and another sweet and amiable; if one is a scold and another a peace-maker; one sharp, and shy, and deceitful, and

another round, candid, and honest; if one is a gentleman, and another a clown; one good-natured and another ill-natured; it is chiefly the difference of first birth. It is because they were *born* with these natural graces and virtues, or faults and vices. To be sure, the deeper and more vital distinctions of character, such as run into the very life of man, and present us with those specimens of unselfishness and philanthropy which are the praise and glory of the world, are generally confined to Christian people. (Speaking now within the limits of Christendom.) And they may be said to be, in a vast, preponderating measure, accompanied and stimulated by the influences of Christianity. But still the truth applies, that Christianity seeks out its nobler stock on which to graft these excellences. They do not come so to the lowest and vilest of humanity. Allowing for this distinction, and the truth is conspicuous that goodness as well as intelligence favors the noblest born. There are born philanthropists as well as born poets and mathematicians. There is native moral genius as well as intellectual. But in this use of the term native, I include, as I have said, all that good which has been transmitted from

a more or less regenerate parentage. And speaking generally, in this sense, the virtue of the world, in any one generation, is as little dependent, it seems, upon education, or any extraneous spiritual influences, as its intelligence: and both are quite as much indebted to native qualities which have stimulated and secured them. In fact, if we see them running so much into each other, that is, the native and the acquired, as, in a long view, to quite confound frequently all analyzation of comparative forces, this abates not from the conspicuity of our main subject, but establishes the vital and everlasting importance of character secured in the native organism, by a sound, healthy, and original manhood.

After all that has been said, no one will certainly accuse me of disparaging education at all; and I am free to acknowledge what triumphs of Christianity — what conquests of God's grace there are, over many an inveterate sinner, and many a depraved and vicious habit. Let no one think that I am seeking any new importance for our old and fallen nature. It is no part of my theology at all. And if I overstate in some particulars, it is inadvertently, while I am only aiming at important

truth in general, and in the particulars that have been so sadly and sinfully overlooked.

I see, too, how feeble all this *merely* natural virtue may be, till it is adopted by the spirit, and carried into life and practice from a religious principle. I see that these good and evil qualities are neither virtues nor vices, properly speaking, till acted out at an age of accountability. They are mere germs of character hid in the organism. It was not, with the evil, original *sin*, but it was original organism — tendency, which broke out into sin. And with the good, though it was nothing but natural good, which may not abide the spiritual life — may not be chosen and adopted by the interior man, and hence may not abide in eternity, yet it is very prominent and active, very characteristic and amiable, and very desirable as stock in trade to begin with, for it is the very ground of the Spirit's operation. And thus, I say, in this *surface* humanity — which, after all, is a very desirable and admirable surface, and much deeper than we may at first imagine, the chief difference among men seems to be, at least in any one or two generations, not what education and regeneration have in this time made, but what has

proceeded in natural course by the impetus of character given at birth. This, of course, as modified by spiritual influences in very early infancy and childhood, as before stated. And when we see how this inheritance is the ground and foundation of all that comes after — the attracting point for all the glories and graces of the heavens, around which the angels gather in their co-operating efforts for our salvation, we may perhaps learn to prize it with a new and deeper interest, and pray God to sanctify our children even from the *first act* of our most fearful, yet most highly privileged, procreative agency.

And so we come round again to our grand conclusion, forced upon us by every consideration of human improvement, by every fact in nature, by every Christian experience, by all history, and borne down upon us by all the weight and authority of the mighty laws of hereditary descent, that our whole life, being, and welfare, in time and eternity, is bound up in this wondrous connection of the first and second births; — that the regeneration of the soul of the Christian is invested with its mightiest and most stupendous influence, as it bears upon his immediate offspring and upon un-

told generations;—and that there can be no true reform, and nothing thoroughly attempted, till attention is directed here, at the sources of power, and till Christ walks the earth again in little children, born of regenerate parents, not of lust but of love, and by special consecration for that holy work in the homes of a heavenly **MARRIAGE**.

