

and decadent religious institutions : not shutting your eyes to the white hairs and tottering steps, not fanatically striving to endow the venerable with immortality, not embalming that which is already dead, but letting that which is old die in peace, and when dead burying it reverently in the dust ; remembering for your comfort that, though the body dies, the spirit lives for ever, that when the old passes away something new and better takes its place. It is sad to lose such a one as Simeon the just and devout ; but why mourn for him when a *Christ* is born ? ”

Wise counsel, and accepted by all as such in reference to revolutions lying behind them in past history. Good counsel, we think, for the Hebrew Christians, and for the men of the sixteenth century when Luther introduced his reforms. The difficulty is to accept and act on the counsel in connexion with changes impending or now going on. Then the voice of wisdom is by many mistaken for blasphemy. “ Abolish the Sinaitic covenant, and the law, and the priesthood—what an impious outrage ! ” It is this that makes the prophet ever a heavy-hearted man. He sees so clearly to be a duty what to other men appears a crime.

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HEREDITY AND ITS EVANGELICAL ANALOGIES.

(ROM. v. 15-19 ; 1 COR. xv. 21, 22, 45-49.)

THE offence of the ancestor involves the race in disability, condemnation and temporal death. The obedience of One lifts the race with which He becomes incorporated as its Head and Representative, to strength, acceptance, and eternal life. What is that but the great scientific law of heredity reaching out into the sphere of the unseen, and forming a momentous factor in man's relation with his Maker and his

Judge? The sin of one darkens the lot of all to the end of time. The sacrificial righteousness of One effaces the shadow, and brings possible blessedness into the lot of all.

Not infrequently the man of science gives to the religious thinker an analogy that becomes fruitful and instructive in its application to spiritual things. In the passages at the head of this paper the religious thinker anticipates the man of science, and shows that in the moral government of God there is a foreshadowing of those mysterious laws of heredity which the biologist is now tracing out in the social development of the race. The Jew had some perception of the momentous bearing of this influential law. It is more than hinted in the story of the fall. Jewish exclusiveness grew up in part out of a vague apprehension of the truth that intellectual and moral aptitudes are prone to run in the blood. All castes, whether royal or priestly or industrial, are based on the belief that qualities of skill and disposition are inheritable both for good and for evil. Indeed, it seems not unlikely that the insects which divide themselves into castes have some faint gleam of this law, or, at least, the ancestors whose traditions they obey had. The Jew expected that the worst things in this entail of evil could be cut off by a strict principle of tribal selection, taking for its starting point blood-relationship to Abraham. St. Paul, who had been trained in the strictest caste prejudices, and who had thought of this subject in many lights, had come to see that the entail must be cut off by conjunction to a new and spiritual Head of humanity. The law of heredity in its evangelical aspects and applications is the theme of these striking verses.

The intellect of the present century is in revolt against the old gospel doctrines of original sin and redemption by the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Is it not strange that the same century should have emphasised again and again this natural law, which contains in germ every

principle involved in these old-fashioned doctrines, and yet, at the same time, be blind to the evangelical analogy involved in this law? The argument, of course, will be wasted on the man who declares that nature is immoral, and that there can be no righteous and guiding will behind its anarchic struggle. But for the man who believes the God of nature, the analogy must be accepted as a stepping-stone towards faith.

Original sin! Vicarious atonement!—Fantastic inventions of man's diseased conscience and imagination, you are ready to say: doctrines that should be preached only to the rudest and gloomiest and least enlightened sections of the human race! The very expressions traverse all our intuitions of right. Monstrous teaching, that we should be handicapped by the sin of one primitive man, from whom we chance to be descended, in all our after destiny! An evangel of sheer extravagance, that can only be demoralizing in its issues, to assert that we shall be set free from punishment through the vicarious pain of some holy Jew, from whom we are not even descended, but who is supposed to incorporate Himself with us and fulfil the function of a compensating spiritual ancestorship to our degenerate natures.

By the analogy of this indisputable law of heredity we vindicate every principle assumed in rational definitions of the doctrines of original sin and vicarious sacrifice. However mysterious the process by which the experience of the first individual of a species is passed on to all the members of the species, whether by some mark left upon a nerve, a quality infused into the blood, a force that hides itself in some secret cell, or by channels that are beyond the power of the senses to trace, and are to that extent immaterial, the fact is beyond dispute. In all circles of life, for weal or for woe, experience is handed on from sire to offspring, and exerts its influence generation after generation.

Go to the student of animal life, and ask him, "What

is instinct?" and he replies, "Stored up knowledge, acquired by experience and observation; knowledge that has been transmitted into habit, and passed on from generation to generation." It is the inheritance which the ancestor of a species leaves to its descendants, and the foundation of the habit is laid by the act of the ancestor. That act determines the life and destiny of the untold individuals who make up the species. The tastes and passions of wolves and tigers and hyænas were acquired in the primeval struggle for life, and passed with the blood into all the after progeny. The industrial instincts of ants and bees took their rise in the foresight and activity of some far-off patriarch of the different groups of families, who may have felt the pinch of famine, and came to comprehend, like Joseph in Egypt, how the emergencies of the future could be provided against. By laws unknown to himself, and equally unknown to us, he managed to leave these thrifty and provident habits as an inheritance to his children's children. His sagacity communicated itself to all his after generations. By his one act many became industrious and provident. You take, as a further illustration, the locusts that deposit their eggs on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. If there had never been left to them, by way of an inheritance, the cue to a more luxurious kind of life, they would have had a starved-out kind of existence, and could never have multiplied into a formidable host. Some Columbus, in the early history of the family, guessed that, by sailing on the north-west wind when it began to blow, more luxurious pastures might be found than at home. So it spread its wings, and found wonderful harvests of green awaiting it on the plains to the east. The act influenced its progeny. A sense of the advantage of this periodic migration passed into the eggs from which the descendants emerged, and every three or four years the creatures come to some parts of America in numbers

sufficient to clear three or four hundred miles of cornfields. By the one act of some discerning patriarch of the family the secret of life was impressed upon hundreds of millions.

The nightingale that has been reared from the egg, and that has never heard the song of the parent bird, will utter the plaintive melodies of the soft June nights untaught. The secret of the music has been handed down by mysterious channels from the first great singer of the race. The keynote was struck far centuries back, and by the one song the long line of life has been made melodious. Turn for another illustration of the principle to the shepherd dog. Some discerning progenitor of the family had interpreted the wish of the shepherd, and acquired the knack of running round the flock and bringing the scattered sheep to a common centre. The aptitude was transmitted to its descendants, and the exploit became a family accomplishment that could not be taught outside the limits of the breed. No poodle or King Charles could be taught the work. The one act ruled the race. The same too with the setter. Some shrewd sire of the breed got the idea that his master wished him to act as a game-signal. In unknown ways the trick communicated itself with the blood to its descendants; and now a dog of the breed, untaught and reared away from its parents, will report the whereabouts of game by its attitude as clearly as the quartermaster on the bridge of the ship will report a sail. By what at the outset was a single perception and a single act of the ancestor, all generations acquire the capacity of rendering a useful service to mankind. A physician of antiquity proved that a new-born kid will at once select milk from a number of jars containing oil, flour, honey, and milk respectively. The tastes of its ancestry were infixed within its organization. Antipathies transmit themselves in just the same way. A careful observer tells us that one day, after fondling his dog, he put his hand into a basket

containing four kittens whose eyes were not yet open. As soon as they perceived the scent of the dog, they at once began to puff and to spit. The antipathy of ancestors had transmitted itself. Whatever the brute may *become*, it starts life as the sum of the acts and habits of its progenitors.

And when we come to the study of man, we find the same law obviously at work in his genealogical history. Peculiarities of structure tend to run in families. Families are not unknown in which there is a tendency to abnormal developments, such as six fingers. Nervous habits propagate themselves in families. Mr. Darwin uses as one of his illustrations the case of a French family, all the members of which, for three generations, had the habit of raising the hand in sleep and letting it fall across the bridge of the nose. Lord Brougham's handwriting presented most curious resemblances to his grandfather's, although he had never seen his grandfather's handwriting till his own style was formed. Artistic capacities and incapacities run in the blood. Birmingham artisans possess a deftness of touch and a delicacy of manipulation that are quite unrivalled, from the fact that mechanical avocations have been cultivated and followed for several generations. By the first triumphant acts of mechanical skill in their forefathers it is easy for them to become workmen of first-class dexterity. There are towns in Italy in which taste is hereditary, and you cannot transplant their industries without transplanting their peoples. Some of the exquisite industries of the East owe their perfection to the fact that they have been the monopolies from time immemorial of particular castes. Fighting qualities are developed within certain families and nations. A mysterious quality of blood comes in to fit them for the field, just as much as training and tradition. Moral acts moreover leave a very much deeper impression on the life than mental and muscular acts, and the deeper the impression, the higher the probability that the tendency

created by the act will imprint itself on the offspring. We know only too well how vices run in the blood. The tendency to drink, to riot and violence, to gambling, to improvidence, runs like a magnetic current from the pole of hell in the veins of some families. The grandchild of a drunkard, who has been trained to the strictest temperance, will sometimes have become a drunkard before any one suspects it. The other day a man was begging at my door who was neither gambler nor drunkard, but in whom thriftless and lazy habits were hereditary. His mother had been before the magistrates more than twenty times for begging.

And so persistent is this law, that there is something of evil in every one of us that has come down from the first man. Consequences of his act and habit descend into our century, and imprint themselves upon us. Broad characteristics of structure we owe to the first ancestor, and, in a limited degree, the general outlines of our uncomely and ill-balanced moral natures run back to the same source. And if we inherit for evil, which is simply a modernised statement of the old doctrine of original sin, is it not likely that some hidden wellspring of purity and Divine inspiration will be opened to us, from which we may inherit for good, which is simply another form of the doctrine of Christ's vicarious ministry of grace? We know that the ancestry of wrong has imprinted itself upon our dispositions and sympathies and experiences. We feel its shadow every day in a thousand ways. And are we not dimly conscious of some benign moral power that is working to over-ride the disastrous tendency that is a part of our very nature, and that is fulfilling to us what I may perhaps call an ancestry of right and renewal and salvation?

But some objector will be ready with the reply: "This, after all, is not the question in dispute. If the theologians meant by the old doctrine of original sin simply the scientific law of heredity, or even that law applied to the philo-

sophy of man's moral relations, there would be little room for controversy. We are prepared to admit that moral and immoral qualities may pass in the blood from sire to son. The law is a mystery to us, and not easy to reconcile with our ideas of right and moral liberty. It is there, and if we admit that intelligence presides over the facts of the universe, it must be there by the permission of the Supreme, and we have nothing to say. But the one thing against which we do protest is this idea of the old theologians, that the guilty status of the first transgressor, with all its essential privations and penalties, should come down to the latest generations, and attach to the little child on its mother's breast. That is a theological echo of the Jew's cruel cry for vengeance, 'Happy shall he be that dasheth thy little ones against a stone.' It is an affront to every principle of equity to assume that the race was doomed to even temporary disfranchisement and death by the sin of its first representative."

Do not let us travel quite so fast, and overrun the argument. Can we separate the two things, the transmission of this bias to evil, and that unhappy status before God and the universe which the theologian calls "guilt"? If the inclination to evil is inherited, disfavour and condemnation must be inherited as an environment likewise from the beginning. To revert to the lower realms of life for an illustration. The good or bad quality acquired by the progenitor of a species affects all the after fortunes of the race. When some discerning ant perceived the havoc to ant-life wrought by overflowing rivers, and led its comrades up a tree trunk to build a nest beyond the reach of the flood, did it not by that one act, which became the foundation of an instinct, save the uncounted swarms of its after descendants? If some ant was too busy in a forsaken honeycomb to heed that counsel of safety, or too wickedly lazy to follow this new departure, would it not by the one

act, which left its many descendants destitute of the leadings of this wise instinct, doom them to death by flood in uncounted numbers? In the one movement of the ancestor the species was practically saved or lost. I believe there is a law which forbids the keeping or breeding of bloodhounds in England. A man might argue it was unjust to predestinate innocent pups to death. They can scarcely be held responsible for the murderous doings of their ancestors, and made a breed of outlaws. But the hereditary law is so sure, that the character or status of the ancestor descends along with the unfailing bias. The dog of the shepherd or the sportsman owes its place by the fireside of the cottage, or in the warm, clean-swept, well-provisioned kennel, and its position as the companion of a fond master, to the one discerning act of the ancestor. But for that act, which originated habit and cradled instinct, the species would have been doomed to the pariah life of the streets, or the precarious and ever-threatened life of the jungle and the forest. The one act of the original representative of the family determined to no small degree the fate of the individuals comprising the breed. The chick that first came to understand the danger-cluck of the hen that was watching over it, and unconsciously imprinted its intelligence upon its offspring, saved from the clutch of hawk or teeth of fox countless broods of successors. Whole species may be saved or lost by the acts of ancestors. The many are made obedient by the act of one, and live; or disobedient, and perish. Critical junctures of this sort occur in the life of every species.

And this is true, with certain limitations, in the realm of human life and morals. A little more than a century back, a profligate woman of the name of Jukes lived in Massachusetts. Five generations, numbering in all about five hundred souls, have since sprung from that woman. More than half of them have passed through the prisons

of the United States, or have lived lives of open debauchery. A woman was once in the Glasgow gaol, to whom fifty thieves and dissolute females now trace their descent. You would never take a cashier for your shop or office with such a pedigree. Would you allow any of your children to marry into the Jukes family, however respectable in outward appearance, and however prosperous in worldly matters the particular representative of the family might have become? You would rather bury them. You know what the law of heredity means. It prejudices the outward status, as well as gives a warped bias to the soul. Where no personal crime has developed itself for the time being upon the surface of the life, you feel quite justified in attaching disabilities to the known pre-inclination. In so far as it is necessary to protect the well-being of your business and the purity of your family life, you disfranchise and ban and condemn. You believe in original sin in a yet harsher and more rigorous way even than the old theologies. Is not a man's status before God touched by this law of hereditary evil, before even the evil develops itself into actual transgression? God concluded all under sin, but for a higher motive than that of the man who seeks to guard his family or business interests,—“that He might have mercy upon all.” By one transgression many become sinners.

Inherited frailty and proneness to wrong exist where the face of the life seems wholesome and sound. The predisposition imprinted upon us may only betray itself under critical temptations. A naturalist tells us he once placed some newly hatched chickens upon a piece of smooth carpet, and kept them there for several days. They discovered no such propensity to scratch the ground for food as is characteristic of their kind. At last he sprinkled a little gravel on the carpet. The gravel supplied the necessary stimulus, and they began to scratch at once. There is many a tendency to evil that needs the outward stimulus

to bring it into view. Many a bad temper sleeps whilst the primrose path of courtship lasts, and breaks out when the worries of family life begin to tell, and clumsy hands break the choice bits of glass or china. Many a villainous crook of the conscience sleeps so long as prosperity lasts, but uncoils itself to view when prosperity has gone, and ways and means of keeping up appearances have to be devised. The hidden taint does not present itself to your sense or mine; but it is there, and God sees it, and has to reckon with the ugly factor. More than that, God foresees the inbred evil in association with the after-expression to which it is leaning. In the sin of Adam the race was condemned, although not hopelessly. God would not have been omniscient if He had left it unbranded. The race was representatively condemned, as a sign of the solemn truth that we are all members of a species, and related the one to the other by most awful ties. And the race was likewise provisionally saved in the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The preaching of the gospel and the ministry of the Church are to quicken those possibilities of a better moral life that we receive from Christ. The old evangelical theology, with its corner-stones of representation for evil, wrath, and death in Adam, and representation for grace, justification, and life in Christ, is vindicated by the analogy of this scientific law, at least for the man who believes in design, and looks upon the law of heredity as sealed with the authority of God.

And now we can advance another step in the argument. If a man inherit wrath, disability, condemnation through his relation to another, shall he not be free to inherit help, favour, and everlasting life? Shall these laws of heredity be tracks by which chartered curses shall be free to travel, and shall they not be open likewise for the winged benedictions that are to visit man from the presence of his God and Saviour? The argument admits of a yet stronger statement. Not only is the abstract principle of vicarious-

ness justified by the analogies of this great natural law, but the vicarious sacrifice and ministry are necessary to equalize and readjust the derangements growing up out of the law of heredity. God's government is full of compensatory forces and agencies and principles. If evil is transmissible, and not good, no wonder men should cry out against the Most High, and at last part with belief in His existence as gladly as they shake off nightmares. There is nothing one-sided in either the natural or moral government of God. The work of the Second Adam comes in to restore the balance of moral forces disturbed in the fall of the first. When we limit our view to the field of nature, and see how many around us are handicapped in the race of life, and are called to bear in their vitiated organizations the sins of long lines of evil ancestors; and when we at the same time forget the unseen compensations that come down to them from the grace of Jesus Christ, no wonder we cry out against the old theological conception of life and responsibility. We can only keep our faith in God by recognising the second stronger Head and Representative of the race, Jesus Christ. The sin of Adam is more than outweighed in its influence over us by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The new pulse of life from the cross is mightier than the tide of tainted life that comes to us from the foot of the forbidden tree. The transfusion of grace prevails over that of corruption. "Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound."

An ordinary watch will not keep time when subjected to great variations of temperature. Under the influence of extreme heat or cold its parts contract and expand. The watchmaker, in preparing a watch that will keep time in all latitudes, puts together a compensating balance. He makes the balance wheel of two different metals, that lie side by side with each other. Under a high temperature one metal contracts and the other expands, and the process is reversed under cold. In this way the balance is preserved, and

the watch runs under all vicissitudes. So is it in the mechanism of man's moral nature. Whilst the influence of Adam's act and personality is present in us, that of Christ is present likewise, and the integrity of our responsibility is thus maintained.

It is sometimes argued that man is the irresponsible product of his surroundings. The influence of inherited evil is so emphasised, that the idea of accountability to God is made to look very much like an extravagance. The momentum of the inbred tendency to wrong is contemplated with such exclusive attention, that the man's own part in contributing to the sum of character, as well as the part of the unseen Christ, are entirely forgotten. Let it never be forgotten that we inherit a great deal more good than evil, that all things are created in Christ, that the capacity for righteousness transcends the innate temptation to falsehood and guile, and that to the unholy bias in every life there is an offset of latent grace and benediction. If we are prepared to recognise our relation to Christ, and to righteousness, and to be led by the Spirit, we shall abundantly prove that. Not to speak of these Bible records of Adam and Christ, we know well enough that in every life there are wonderful moral compensations. The incarnation and the cross wield an unknown dominion over us, which more than emancipates from the despotisms of passions that had their birth in the taste of the forbidden fruit. The conditions of individual responsibility are reasserted, and the proverb no longer holds, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge."

The influences that come to us from these great primal relations follow the analogy of hereditary instincts in some other particulars. A disused instinct dies out. If ducklings are kept away from water for a time, they will show as much antipathy to it as cats. Chickens kept away from the hen for eight days will lose the instinct that once

taught them to respond to her call. Domesticated cattle will devour to their destruction poisonous herbs that wild cattle will avoid. There are plastic crises in our lives at which our inherited tendencies may be changed and extirpated. The bias to wrong may be removed, but the leaning to right may also be effaced. It is for us to choose from these tendencies that come to us by way of inheritance, and to build them up into the solemn permanencies of our immortality.

But some one may be ready to protest that this conception of the relation of each member of the race to Adam and to Christ is vague and incapable of common-sense proof. If Adam is not a myth, we at least know very little about him. Christ also looms through an atmosphere of dim tradition. I reply, the influence of these relationships is a question of experience, rather than history. Not a few men around us find an inexplicable and all but quenchless thirst for drink in their veins. They do not need to have the oil painting of some tippling old ancestor in the house, and a full biography of him in the family archives. The hereditary crave proves that the tippling ancestor is no myth, although mythical stories may still be told about him in the village. A man finds himself the slave of a querulous and captious temper that almost passes into insanity. But the picture of some ancestral bully or swashbuckler does not necessarily rise before him with every outbreak of temper. A man may find himself prone to an animal life in some special degree by the self-indulgence of a great-grandfather whose history and exploits have been a forbidden topic in the family. Experience proves the taint, and you need no separate biography as evidence.

And we may have a great deal of the fleshly nature within us, without having any very distinct picture of the Garden of Eden Adam, who helped to taint us by his first transgression. And the converse truth is equally sound. We

may receive light and favour and holy incitement from Jesus Christ, without having any very clear intellectual conception of His character and personality, or any very realistic vision of His history. Christianity is not what Mrs. Humphrey Ward and Professor Huxley assert, purely a question of the worth of historic testimony. It is a question of personal experience. The saving merit and hallowing influence and succour of our Lord are verified for us by the springs of pure and upright and godly inspiration that strangely rise unbidden within us and change our life. Our comprehension of the source of inheritance may be defective. But for all that we have the double inheritance, and Adam and Christ sway us more effectually than we know.

But it may be asked, How can Adam and Christ be fairly coupled in this comparison? There can be no outward and organic relation to Christ, for we are not His children according to the flesh. To this question, which is as old as Nicodemus, I reply, We are not sure that hereditary taints of character come through the channels of a man's physical life, though we describe them as planted in the blood or woven into the tissues of the brain. The two relations are equally mysterious. Christ can unite Himself as effectually to us by the Spirit, and as thoroughly remove our inbred evil, as though He gave to our flesh and blood a new earthly parentage. Nor is it necessary that Christ's life should be materialized in the eucharistic elements and incorporated for the removal of the old Adam by a sacramental miracle. The wonder-working Spirit can come to us without a visible vehicle. Our relation to the first Adam is by the flesh; our relation to the second Adam by the Spirit. But the second type of relation, if less sensible in its mode, may be just as real as the first. We are made clean by the word which grafts us into Christ.

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