

Prenatal Influences

The Importance of Prenatal Influences.

The effect of prenatal influences is by many parents looked upon as a matter of little moment; but heaven does not so regard it. The message sent by an angel of God, and twice given in the most solemn manner, shows it to be deserving of our most careful thought. MH 372 (1905).

A Contented Spirit Affects Offspring.

Every woman about to become a mother, whatever may be her surroundings, should encourage constantly a happy, cheerful, contented disposition, knowing that for all her efforts in this direction she will be repaid tenfold in the physical, as well as in the moral, character of her offspring. Nor is this all. By habit she can accustom herself to cheerful thinking, and thus encourage a happy state of mind and cast a cheerful reflection of her own happiness of spirit upon her family and those with whom she associates.

And in a very great degree her physical health will be improved. A force will be imparted to the life-springs, the blood will not move sluggishly, as would be the case if she were to yield to despondency and gloom. Her mental and moral health are invigorated by the buoyancy of her spirits. RH, July 25, 1899. (CH 79.)

Mother's Feelings Mold Disposition of Unborn Child.

The thoughts and feelings of the mother will have a powerful influence upon the legacy she gives her child. If she allows her mind to dwell upon her own feelings, if she indulges in selfishness, if she is peevish and exacting, the disposition of her child will testify to the fact. Thus many have received as a birthright almost unconquerable tendencies to evil. ST, Sept 13, 1910. (Te 171.)

If the mother unswervingly adheres to right principles, if she is temperate and self-denying, if she is kind, gentle, and unselfish, she may give her child these same precious traits of character.

The Prenatal Influence of Peace.

She who expects to become a mother should keep her soul in the love of God. Her mind should be at peace; she should rest in the love of Jesus, practicing the words of Christ. She should remember that the mother is a laborer together with God.

Father to Become Acquainted With Physical Law.

The strength of the mother should be tenderly cherished. Instead of spending her precious strength in exhausting labor, her care and burdens should be lessened. Often the husband and father is unacquainted with the physical laws which the well-being of his family requires him to understand. Absorbed in the struggle for a livelihood, or bent on acquiring wealth and pressed with cares and perplexities, he allows to rest upon the wife and mother burdens that overtax her strength at the most critical period and cause feebleness and disease. MH 373 (1905).

Children Robbed of Mental Elasticity.

If the mother is deprived of the care and comforts she should have, if she is allowed to exhaust

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her strength through overwork or through anxiety and gloom, her children will be robbed of the vital force and of the mental elasticity and cheerful buoyancy they should inherit. Far better will it be to make the mother's life bright and cheerful, to shield her from want, wearing labor, and depressing care, and let the children inherit good constitutions so that they may battle their way through life with their own energetic strength.

Mother's Needs Not to Be Neglected.

The mother's physical needs should in no case be neglected. Two lives are depending upon her, and her wishes should be tenderly regarded, her needs generously supplied. But at this time above all others she should avoid, in diet and in every other line, whatever would lessen physical or mental strength. By the command of God Himself she is placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control. MH 373

Wife's Responsibility.

Women who possess principle and who are well instructed will not depart from simplicity of diet at this time [pregnancy] of all others. They will consider that another life is dependent upon them and will be careful in all their habits, and especially in diet. 2T

Innocent Offspring Will Be Sufferers.

Diseased children are born because of the gratification of appetite by the parents. The system did not demand the variety of food upon which the mind dwelt. Because once in the mind it must be in the stomach is a great error which Christian women should reject. Imagination should not be allowed to control the wants of the system. Those who allow the taste to rule will suffer the penalty of transgressing the laws of their being. And the matter does not end here; their innocent offspring also will be sufferers.-

Unwise advisers will urge upon the mother the gratification of every wish and impulse as essential to the well-being of her offspring. Such advice is false and mischievous. By the command of God Himself the mother is placed under the most solemn obligation to exercise self-control. Whose voice shall we heed the voice of divine wisdom or the voice of human superstition? ST, Feb. 26,

Pregnant Mother to Form Habits of Self-denial.

The mother who is a fit teacher for her children must, before their birth, form habits of self-denial and self-control; for she transmits to them her own qualities, her own strong or weak traits of character. The enemy of souls understands this matter much better than do many parents. He will bring temptation upon the mother, knowing that if she does not resist him, he can through her affect her child. The mother's only hope is in God. She may flee to Him for grace and strength. She will not seek help in vain. He will enable her to transmit to her offspring qualities that will help them to gain success in this life and to win eternal life. ST,

The Basis of Right Character.

The basis of a right character in the future man is made firm by habits of strict temperance in the mother prior to the birth of her child. . . This lesson should not be regarded with indifference.

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Race Groaning Under Weight of Accumulated Woe.

The race is groaning under a weight of accumulated woe because of the sins of former generations. And yet with scarcely a thought or care, men and women of the present generation indulge intemperance by surfeiting and drunkenness and thereby leave, as a legacy for the next generation, disease, enfeebled intellects, and polluted morals.4T 31 (1876).

Insatiable Cravings, Unholy Desires Transmitted to Young.

Both parents transmit their own characteristics, mental and physical, their dispositions and appetites, their children....Liquor drinkers and tobacco users may, and do, transmit their insatiable craving, their inflamed blood and irritable nerves, to their children. The licentious often bequeath their unholy desires, and even loathsome diseases, as a legacy to their offspring. And as the children have less power to resist temptation than had the parents, the tendency is for each generation to fall lower and lower.PP 561 (1890).

As a rule, every intemperate man who rears children transmits his inclinations and evil tendencies to his offspring.

Samson's Prenatal Life Regulated by God.

The words spoken to the wife of Manoah contain a truth that the mothers of today would do well to study. In speaking to this one mother, the Lord spoke to all the anxious, sorrowing mothers of that time and to all the mothers of succeeding generations. Yes, every mother may understand her duty. She may know that the character of her children will depend vastly more upon her habits before their birth and her personal efforts after their birth than upon external advantages or disadvantages.ST, Feb 26,

God had important work for the promised child of Manoah to do, and it was to secure for him the qualifications necessary for this work that the habits of both the mother and the child were to be so carefully regulated....The child will be affected for good or evil by the habits of the mother. She must herself be controlled by principle and must practice temperance and self-denial if she would seek the welfare of her child. CTBH 38, 1890.

Fathers as Well as Mothers Involved.

Fathers as well as mothers are involved in this responsibility, and they too should seek earnestly for divine grace that their influence may be such as God can approve. The inquiry of every father and mother should be, "What shall we do unto the child that shall be born?" By many the effect of prenatal influence has been lightly regarded; but the instruction sent from heaven to those Hebrew parents, and twice repeated in the most explicit and solemn manner, shows how the matter is looked upon by the Creator.ST, Feb 26, 1902.

Parents' Own Stamp Given to Children.

Parents...by indulgence have strengthened their animal passions. And as these have strengthened, the moral and intellectual faculties have become weak. The spiritual has been overborne by the brutish. Children are born with the animal propensities largely developed, the parents' own stamp of character having been given to them. . . . The brain force is weakened,

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and memory becomes deficient.... The sins of the parents will be visited upon their children because the parents have given them the stamp of their own lustful propensities.

Satan Seeks to Debase Minds.

I have been shown that Satan seeks to debase the minds of those who unite in marriage, that he may stamp his own hateful image upon their children....

He can mold their posterity much more readily than he could the parents, for he can so control the minds of the parents that through them he may give his own stamp of character to their children. Thus many children are born with the animal passions largely in the ascendancy while the moral faculties are but feebly developed.

Reason Should Control Number of Children

Those who increase their number of children, when if they consulted reason, they must know that physical and mental weakness must be their inheritance, are transgressors of the last six precepts of God's law. . . . They do their part in increasing the degeneracy of the race and in sinking society lower, thus injuring their neighbor. If God thus regards the rights of neighbors, has He no care in regard to closer and more sacred relationship? If not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice, will He be unmindful of the children born into the world, diseased physically and mentally, suffering in a greater or less degree, all their lives? Will He not call parents to an account, to whom He has given reasoning powers, for putting these higher faculties in the background and becoming slaves to passion, when, as the result, generations must bear the mark of their physical, mental, and moral deficiencies?

Diminished Energy Transmitted.

Men and women who have become sickly and diseased have often in their marriage connections selfishly thought only of their own happiness. They have not seriously considered the matter from the standpoint of noble, elevated principles, reasoning in regard to what they could expect of their posterity, but diminished energy of body and mind, which would not elevate society but sink it still lower.

Disease Passed From Generation to Generation.

Sickly men have often won the affections of women apparently healthy, and because they loved each other, they felt themselves at perfect liberty to marry. . . . If those who thus enter the marriage relation were alone concerned, the sin would not be so great. Their offspring are compelled to be sufferers by disease transmitted to them. Thus disease has been perpetuated from generation to generation.... They have thrown upon society an enfeebled race, and done their part to deteriorate the race, by rendering disease hereditary, and thus accumulating human suffering.

Age Difference a Factor.

Another cause of the deficiency of the present generation in physical strength and moral worth is men and women uniting in marriage whose ages widely differ. . . . The offspring of such unions in many cases, where ages widely differ, have not well-balanced minds. They have been deficient also in physical strength. In such families have frequently been manifested varied,

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peculiar, and often painful traits of character. They often die prematurely, and those who reach maturity, in many cases, are deficient in physical and mental strength and moral worth.

Thus a class of beings have been thrown upon the world as a burden to society. Their parents were accountable in a great degree for the characters developed by their children, which are transmitted from generation to generation.

God Will Hold Us Responsible for Prenatal Neglect.

Women have not always followed the dictates of reason instead of impulse. They have not felt in a high degree the responsibilities resting upon them to form such life connections as would not enstamp upon their offspring a low degree of morals and a passion to gratify debased appetites at the expense of health, and even life. God will hold them accountable in a large degree for the physical health and moral characters thus transmitted to future generations....

Very many of this class have married and left for an inheritance to their offspring the taints of their own physical debility and depraved morals. The gratification of animal passions and gross sensuality have been the marked characters of their posterity, which have descended from generation to generation, increasing human misery to a fearful degree and hastening the depreciation of the race.

Molding Society and Future.

The nobler the aims, the higher the mental and spiritual endowments, and the better developed the physical powers of the parents, the better will be the life equipment they give their children. In cultivating that which is best in themselves, parents are exerting an influence to mold society and to uplift future generations....

Through the indulgence of appetite and passion their energies are wasted, and millions are ruined for this world and for the world to come. Parents should remember that their children must encounter these temptations. Even before the birth of the child, the preparation should begin that will enable it to fight successfully the battle against evil.

Especially does responsibility rest upon the mother. She, by whose lifeblood the child is nourished and its physical frame built up, imparts to it also mental and spiritual influences that tend to the shaping of mind and character. MH 371, 372 (1905).

Parents Have Given Children Their Own Stamp of Character.

Parents have given their children their own stamp of character; and if some traits are unduly developed in one child, and another reveals a different phase of character which is unlovely, who should be as patient and forbearing and kind as the parents? Who should be as earnest as they to cultivate in their children the precious graces of character revealed in Christ Jesus?

Mothers do not half appreciate their privileges and possibilities. They do not seem to understand that they can be in the highest sense missionaries, laborers together with God in aiding their children to build up a symmetrical character. This is the great burden of the work given them of God. The mother is God's agent to Christianize her family. RH, Sept 15, 1891.

The Responsibility of Parents for Prenatal Influence.

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The first great object to be attained in the training of children is soundness of constitution which will prepare the way in a great measure for mental and moral training. Physical and moral health are closely united. What an enormous weight of responsibility rests upon parents when we consider that the course pursued by them before the birth of their children has very much to do with the development of their character after their birth.

What to Do About It.

Parents may have transmitted to their children tendencies. . . . which will make more difficult the work of educating and training these children to be strictly temperate and to have pure and virtuous habits. If the appetite for unhealthy food and for stimulants and narcotics has been transmitted to them as a legacy from their parents, what a fearfully solemn responsibility rests upon the parents to counteract the evil tendencies which they have given to their children! How earnestly and diligently should the parents work to do their duty, in faith and hope, to their unfortunate offspring!

A Day of Reckoning for Parents.

-When parents and children meet at the final reckoning, what a scene will be presented! Thousands of children who have been slaves to appetite and debasing vice, whose lives are moral wrecks, will stand face-to-face with the parents who made them what they are. Who but the parents must bear this fearful responsibility? Did the Lord make these youth corrupt? Oh, no! Who, then, has done this fearful work? Were not the sins of the parents transmitted to the children in perverted appetites and passions? And was not the work completed by those who neglected to train them according to the pattern which God has given? Just as surely as they exist, all these parents will pass in review before God.

More Than Human Wisdom Needed.

Parents should remember that their children must encounter ... temptations. Even before the birth of the child, the preparation should begin that will enable it to fight successfully the battle against evil.-

Happy Are Those Whose Lives Reflect the Divine.

Happy are the parents whose lives are a true reflection of the divine, so that the promises and commands of God awaken in the child gratitude and reverence; the parents whose tenderness and justice and long-suffering interpret to the child the love and justice and long-suffering of God; and who, by teaching the child to love and trust and obey them, are teaching him to love and trust and obey his Father in heaven. Parents who impart to a child such a gift have endowed him with a treasure more precious than the wealth of all the ages; a treasure as enduring as eternity.