

down with it heavier than a millstone about their necks, while others would have comparatively little imputed to them. Is there not a tremendous inequality here—a gulf as wide as the zenith is from the nadir? We should say that the laws of hereditary descent were terribly unjust if they did this thing. But God is the author of those laws. Hence we conclude that God is unjust. But this is not so. Therefore our premises are false, which we greatly suspected. When I suggest that *all* children are born equally innocent and pure, the whole court nods assent.

There is another argument that pleads with convincing though speechless eloquence in behalf of the helpless child. When I stoop over the cradle, even the one rocked by wickedness in an atmosphere reeking with curses if you choose, and watch there till those blue eyes meet with mine, I see them fill with wonderment and beam with an unearthly light. I catch from behind them glimpses of the heaven Jesus spoke of all radiant with innocence, purity and love. Listen to the inspired lines of the poet:

“Trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

Read the whole poem. It is from Wordsworth's famous “Intimations of Immortality in Early Childhood.” It does not depress us with the idea that children come into this life shrouded in gloom, but come enveloped in heavenly light. “He who made us touched our infant soul with some ray of His divine beauty.” O how comforting to know that we are the children of light and not of darkness.

But I am asked: “Are not the evil and vicious propensities of parents inherited by the offspring?” In answer, I say most certainly they are. The Bible acknowledges this; science teaches it; facts abundantly bear it out. Here, then, is the issue: Are *inherited propensities* the same as *inherited sin*? Here is where the thought gets tangled

that has made such a snarled skein of belief. If we separate it carefully here it leaves a smooth and bright warp to weave our deeds into in making that garment called life. However vile and repulsive the garment is when the weaving is finished, it all comes from the dark deeds woven in by the free will of man. We would find, if we examined it closely, that the foundation of life furnished by God, the warp, is golden-threaded throughout. A bad weaver is apt to blame some agency outside of himself for the poor quality of his production. We must not confound *abstract sin* with merely a *propensity* or *privilege* to sin lest we blame God for errors committed by ourselves. We must be exact and clear and conscientiously honest here, for one small breath sends millions upon millions of souls into everlasting torment or into everlasting peace. Which shall it be? Is there any doubt how infinite love and justice would establish it? After the thoughtful hush that this sacred question brings, methinks I hear one answer rise from every reilluminated heart concerning the child-soul: “Of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

It is said that God is impartial. But if He created Adam pure and me impure He certainly is a “respector of persons”—a partial God. But if we come endowed merely with *propensities* to sin we are placed on the same line with Adam, for he was created with those propensities, else he could never have sinned. And Adam we find was created pure, and lived for some time in the Garden of Eden, which is representative of a state of sinlessness. And this happy condition lasted until he wilfully and knowingly disobeyed the plain commandment of God.

Then it is not a sin to inherit propensities or appetites of whatever nature they may be. The sin enters by a conscientious indulgence in the desires that tend to evil—in permitting them to be our masters instead of our servants. Jesus Christ, in the wilderness, felt the