

THE NEW BIRTH.

BY REV. W. G. ELIOT.

THE truth concerning our nature by birth, and the spiritual condition to which we are brought by regeneration, or the new birth, seems to be this. We are born with a mixed constitution, physical, intellectual, and moral. These, as they originally came from the creative hand of God, were pronounced to be good. The moral nature is the highest, that is the soul, and to this the physical, and intellectual, the body and the mind, should minister. But, by the necessity of the case, the physical is developed first, "the first man is of the earth, earthy." Our first wants, our first enjoyments and sufferings, are purely physical. The first exercise of the faculty of thought takes that direction. Self-love, which is needful for self-preservation, is thus early developed. Self-indulgence in what is pleasant, and angry resistance to what is unpleasant, are the natural consequences. All this is not sinful, it is simply of the earth, earthy. It is our physical nature. Gradually the higher nature begins to appear. The sweet affections of the child, pure and truthful, begin to expand. A sense of right, of justice, and of truth, gradually shows itself. At first very weak, but also very correct, for the instincts of childhood upon all moral subjects are sure to be right. In the progress of development, the intellect adds strength either to the physical or moral constitution, according to the natural temperament and the circumstances of education and example.

The period when moral responsibility begins is hard to determine. It certainly does not begin until there is a