

## INSTINCT BUT A RESPONSE TO THE LAW OF HABIT

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## ABSTRACT

"Inherited habit" as applied to instinct is of course not new. I am however just now attempting to not only show that there is such a thing, but also to tell what it is and how it acts. The organism being but the sum total of its cell units is therefore a thing dominated by the cell. But the cell in its turn is also a thing dominated by what has gone before. It is but that which has been moulded and fixed by many repetitions in past generations—a thing dominated by what I would call the "law of habit." In the full article I have especially endeavored to bring out the following points:

(1) By no process of reasoning could instinctive knowledge in the newly born be accepted as a thing which had been imparted by the mother to the offspring through either teaching or example.

(2) When we fully realize that the cell never dies but merely divides or fertilizes itself, passes over to the next generation and there continues to live, then should we also know that acts in the newly born which were a part of the life conduct of the ancestors for many previous generations must be but the automatic repetitions in the new organism of such life conduct of the past.

(3) In setting forth the *modus operandi* by which this is done, I have sought to show, through a study of the *law of habit* that such repetitions cannot be other than simply that which is compelled by the operation of the uncanny principles of this law. The cell itself, in previous generations, having originally taken on the habit of breeding true through thousands of repetitions and then never dying simply keeps right on repeating in the new organism through the compelling influence of habit the same old practice. Habit having become master the act can not now be done in any other way than by the routine one which is directed by the habit.

(4) As an analogy, attention has been directed to the fact that such things as Leibnitz's law of continuity, Von Baer's law of embryonic development, Galton's law of regression, Mendel's law of heredity, and the fixity of "kind" which is everywhere apparent in nature, may also be all included in the same category. As the planets respond to Keppler's laws of planetary motion so the thing we call instinct, similarly compelled by the *law of habit*, becomes but another one of the great cycles and rhythms of nature. A fool-proof automatic thing in which neither brain nor intelligence is involved and which occurs alike in vegetable as well as in animal life.

(5) Finally, to better explain the thing we call the "homing" instinct, it would seem to be necessary to add to the "special senses" of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing one or two other similar but yet unknown senses which, if they exist at all in man are today only rudimentary.