

Himself, and so, the world. At the moment when the tramp of armed men was heard upon the bridge of Kedron, and the torches as they passed flashed upon the rolling waters, He was prostrate on the ground teaching His will to bow itself down to high heaven, and when later on the low hum of many voices broke the silence of the night, and woke the echoes of the garden, when the torchlight gleamed through the trees, He was bending over James and John and Peter breathing out his deep desire that sleep might hold them in its kindly arms and save them from the coming trial. You know how calm He was, how majestic the rebuke that holy men, bearded Rabbi's and vested priests should send a band of armed ruffians by night to do an act of public justice. In the judgment hall, surrounded by angry priests and sinners swearing falsely, He was still unruffled. On the dark way to Calvary He had thought for the weeping women. On the cross He put up that prayer of mercy that shook heaven and earth:—"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." So Christ did not shun the temptation or the testing, did not ask to have them put away, but met them, and conquered them. The moral victory for the world was preceded by the moral conquest of Himself. He grew as all other men must grow, as only all men can grow, by passing from stage to stage of inward strife. First the trial and triumph in the desert, and then the greater trial and grander triumph in the garden, when all the man bowed down to love and God.

It is so with us all. The greater moral victories are preceded by greater inward struggles. We wonder sometimes that temptations should so thickly and continuously line the ways of life. It came yesterday, we fought it down, and sang our song, thinking we had done. It is here again to-day. The clouds gathered a few hours ago and broke in thunder and lightning and torrents of rain. It passed, now for some peace and rest, no, see there, the clouds have risen above the horizon and are climbing up the sky, and another storm is at hand. What will you do? Cry against the gathering clouds, and pray down the storm? no, don't do that, it is better that the storms should come and that you should meet them. The work to be done is not there, but here, in your own mind and heart, giving strength, you must fight unto the end, every morning will light you to some fresh battlefield, and well for you if every evening sets upon some slain desire, some conquered foe. Ah, I know how hard it is, you fought well and bravely, in the desert and hoped the end had come. But no. This world is grandly built in wisdom and in love, it is sown with trials, spotted all over with temptations that men may learn to grow strong, you turned from the hot and thronged and dusty ways of life to cross the field or climb the hill or plunged into the deep mysterious shadows of the woods, but you couldn't escape temptation. It came in the form of ambitious dream, or rush of wild desire. Nor yet have you done. Gethsemane lies there dark before you, your place of final cry and struggle. Having by the grace of God conquered every sin in you, there by the same grace shall you conquer every trembling weakness and shrinking of the flesh. For you, like the great Captain of our salvation must be made perfect through suffering. But the struggle by night will bring the calmness of the morning, the hour of exceeding bitterness will bring in the day of conquering strength, the prayer for deliverance will call down the power of endurance and angel thoughts of comfort.

One word more. This right use of temptation, the real self conquest can only be made by this two sided apprehension. First of our relation to things of time and sense. They are useful, they are needful. But either of them, all of them may become a source of evil. To get bread is an imperative but *how* to get it is where the trial comes in. Watch that, man must have bread, and more, truth and justice, do not legislate for the bread, but for *yourself*.

And then, there must be a right apprehension of the relation we sustain to God. "O my Father," was the plaintive, trustful cry. God was not an enemy, a fierce, implacable Almightiness, a being to be propitiated, a Herod or a Nero with no limit to his power. He was Father, with a heart to love and a hand to help always. And with answering love that had no fear, a faith that knew no wavering he sent the quick sharp cry piercing the calm night: "if it be possible let this cup pass from me." How can we win conquests until like Christ we have learnt to cry to the heavens, "my Father." If He is less to me than that I cannot turn to Him when the crisis of life has come, I must have a father's heart.

Here is the teaching then, for yourself and for all others who would save the soul, there is the wilderness and its testing. Every part and every passion will be fiercely tried. It is well, manhood is made of positive virtues, not of mere negations. The desert trial is the preparation for the great work of life. And the preparation for the desert trial is the baptism in Jordan. Not the force of laws or customs, or social order, but God in the heart and mind, a baptism of the Holy Ghost. Then there is strength, assurance of victory. And when the clouds have gathered, and the blue lightning is beginning to play round the fingers and you feel that the crisis of life has come, a time when to stand is to stand for ever, the preparation is in this—"O my Father, not my will, but thine be done"—for here you have conquered yourself, you have conquered the world, you have taken heaven by force. The true life gathers strength by conflict, it passes through dark and bitter times as a ray of sunlight pierces the heavy gloom and cloud. The pagan poet tells a story of the fountain, Arethusa which for many a league ran through the salt and bitter sea, from Peloponnesus all the way to Trinicia, and then came up pure sweet and sparkling water, spreading greenness and beauty in the wide valley of Ortygia. Even so your life shall be, if true and faithful—passing through the trial of wealth or poverty, fame or shame, through desert places dark and drear and coming forth a star to shine for ever in the firmament above.

A. J. BRAY.

WISDOM OF OUR ANCESTORS.—Our ancestors, up to the Conquest, were children in arms; chubby boys in the time of Edward the First; striplings under Elizabeth; men in the reign of Queen Anne; and *we* only are the white-bearded, silver-headed ancients, who have treasured up, and are prepared to profit by, all the experience which human life can supply. It is necessary to insist upon this; for upon sacks of wool, and on benches forensic, sit grave men, and agricultural persons in the Commons, crying out "Ancestors, Ancestors! *hoie non!* Saxons, Danes, save us! Fiddlefrig, help us! Howel, Ethelwolf, protect us!"—Any cover for nonsense—any veil for trash—any pretext for repelling the innovations of conscience and of duty!—*Sydney Smith*.

Nobody who is afraid of laughing, and heartily, too, at his friend, can be said to have a true and thorough love for him; and, on the other hand, it would betray a sorry want of faith to distrust a friend because he laughs at you. Few men, I believe, are much worth loving in whom there is not something well worth laughing at.—*Julius Hare*.

THE SOUL AND FUTURE LIFE.

II.

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But though we do not presume to apologise for death, it is easy to see that many of the greatest moral and intellectual results of life are only possible, can only begin, when the claims of the animal life are satisfied; when the stormy, complex, and chequered career is over, and the higher tops of the intellectual or moral nature alone stand forth in the distance of time. What was the blind old harper of Scio to his contemporaries, or the querulous refugee from Florence, or even the boon-companion and retired playwright of Stratford, or the blind and stern old malignant of Bunhill Fields? The true work of Socrates and his life only began with his resplendent death, to say nothing of yet greater religious teachers, whose names I refrain from citing; and as to those whose lives have been cast in conflicts—the Cæsars, the Alfreds, the Hildebrands, the Cromwells, the Fredericks—it is only after death, oftenest in ages after death, that they cease to be combatants, and become creators. It is not merely that they are only recognised in after-ages; the truth is, that their activity only begins when the surging of passion and sense ends, and turmoil dies away. Great intellects and great characters are necessarily in advance of their age; the care of the father and the mother begins to tell most truly in the ripe manhood of their children, when the parents are often in the grave, and not in the infancy which they see and are confronted with. The great must always feel with Kepler,—'It is enough as yet if I have a hearer now and then in a century.' John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but his soul is marching along.

We can trace this truth best in the case of great men; but it is not confined to the great. Not a single act of thought or character ends with itself. Nay, more; not a single nature in its entirety but leaves its influence for good or for evil. As a fact the good prevail; but all act, all continue to act indefinitely, often in ever-widening circles. Physicists amuse us by tracing for us the infinite fortunes of some wave set in motion by force, its circles and its re-percussions perpetually transmitted in new complications. But the career of a single intellect and character is a far more real force when it meets with suitable intellects and characters into whose action it is incorporated. Every life more or less forms another life, and lives in another life. Civilisation, nation, city, imply this fact. There is neither mysticism nor hyperbole, but simple observation in the belief, that the career of every human being in society does not end with the death of its body. In some sort its higher activities and potency can only begin truly when change is no longer possible for it. The worthy gain in influence and in range at each generation, just as the founders of some populous race gain a greater fatherhood at each succeeding growth of their descendants. And in some infinitesimal degree, the humblest life that ever turned a sod sends a wave—no, more than a wave, a life—through the ever-growing harmony of human society. Not a soldier died at Marathon or Salamis, but did a stroke by which our thought is enlarged and our standard of duty formed to this day.

Be it remembered that this is not hypothesis, but something perfectly real—we may fairly say undeniable. We are not inventing an imaginary world, and saying it must be real because it is so pleasant to think of; we are only repeating truths on which our notion of history and society is based. The idea, no doubt, is usually limited to the famous, and to the great revolutions in civilisation. But no one who thinks it out carefully can deny that it is true of every human being in society in some lesser degree. The idea has not been, or is no longer, systematically enforced, invested with poetry and dignity, and deepened by the solemnity of religion. But why is that? Because theological hypotheses of a new and heterogeneous existence have deadened our interest in the realities, the grandeur, and the perpetuity of our earthly life. In the best days of Rome, even without a theory of history or a science of society, it was a living faith, the true religion of that majestic race. It is the real sentiment of all societies where the theological hypothesis has disappeared. It is no doubt now in England the great motive of virtue and energy. There have been few seasons in the world's history when the sense of moral responsibility and moral survival after death was more exalted and more vigorous than with the companions of Vergniaud and Danton, to whom the dreams of theology were hardly intelligible. As we read the calm and humane words of Condorcet on the very edge of his yawning grave, we learn how the conviction of posthumous activity (not of posthumous fame), how the consciousness of a coming incorporation with the glorious future of his race, can give a patience and a happiness equal to that of any martyr of theology.

It would be an endless inquiry to trace the means whereby this sense of posthumous participation in the life of our fellows can be extended to the mass, as it certainly effects already the thoughtful and the refined. Without an education, a new social opinion, without a religion—I mean an organised religion, not a vague metaphysic—it is doubtless impossible that it should become universal and capable of overcoming selfishness. But make it at once the basis of philosophy, the standard of right and wrong, and the centre of a religion, and this will prove, perhaps, an easier task than that of teaching ceaseless psalmody in an immaterial heaven. The astonishing feat was performed; and, perhaps, it may be easier to fashion a new public opinion, requiring merely that an accepted truth of philosophy should be popularised, not take the suicidal course of trying to cast out the devil of selfishness by a direct appeal to the personal self.

It is here that the strength of the human future over the celestial future is so clearly pre-eminent. Make the future hope a social activity, and we give to personality is stamped deeper on every act of our daily life. Now we make the future hope, in the truest sense, social, inasmuch as our future is simply an active existence prolonged by society. And our future hope rests not in any vague yearning, of which we have as little evidence as we have definite conception: it rests on a perfectly certain truth, accepted by all thoughtful minds, the truth that the actions, feelings, thoughts of every one of us—our minds, our characters, our *souls* as organic wholes—do marvellously influence and mould