

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

His motive was partly, no doubt, that he had fallen out of touch with official theology. But it was also, partly, that he might lay still deeper the foundations of his *magnum opus*. He had long urged the importance of wide Semitic studies for an understanding of the religion of Israel. And the chair he had now accepted gave him a free and spacious field for pursuing these studies.¹

ALEX. R. GORDON.

THE ETHICAL TEACHING OF ST. PAUL.

(3) THE PAGAN VIRTUES.

CHRISTIAN teachers, in their eagerness to maintain the dependence of morality upon religion, have not always done justice to the moral ideals to which man has attained without the aid of revelation. We may, indeed, argue that morality without religion is maimed and imperfect, but to speak as if, apart from the Bible, we have no sure knowledge of duty, and no adequate motive to its performance, is to fly in the face of the most obvious facts of history. "Natural morality," as it has been called, is a real and a great thing; and though its light does not shine with the clear and steady radiance of the Christian revelation, we must not forget that it was the only guide vouchsafed to some of the noblest teachers of moral truth that the world has seen. There is a well-known passage in John Stuart Mill's *Autobiography* in which he describes the kind of education which he received from his father. It was, as nearly as his father knew how to make it, the education of a well-trained pagan. The elder Mill, we are told, partook

¹ In his *Muhammed in Medina* (1882) he says: "I left the Old Testament for Arabic studies with the intention of getting to know the wild-stock on which the shoot of the Torah of Jahve was grafted by priests and prophets. For I have no doubt that a true idea of the original endowments with which the Hebrews stepped on the stage of history can best be gained from a comparative study of Arabian antiquity." (p. 5).

in his views of life of the character of the Stoic, the Epicurean and the Cynic. In his personal qualities the Stoic predominated; his standard of morals was Epicurean; but he had (and this was the Cynic element) scarcely any belief in pleasure. "My father's moral convictions," says Mr. Mill, were "wholly dissevered from religion," and "were very much of the character of those of the Greek philosophers. . . . My father's moral inculcations were at all times mainly those of the 'Socratici viri'; justice, temperance (to which he gave a very extended application), veracity, perseverance, readiness to encounter pain, and especially labour; regard for the public good; estimation of persons according to their merits, and of things according to their intrinsic usefulness; a life of exertion in contradiction to one of self-indulgent ease and sloth."¹ All this is, without doubt, pure paganism; none the less is it moral teaching the worth of which every one instinctively recognizes. What, then, is the relation of the new Christian ethic to this older, natural, non-biblical morality? What place are we to assign in the ethical teaching of St. Paul to the virtues of Paganism? This is the question to which in this paper we seek an answer.

I.

Before anything is said concerning St. Paul's relation to the pre-existing morality it may be well to illustrate a little more in detail the character of the ideals of Paganism. The history of ethics before the time of Christ² centres round the great name of Socrates, and for our present purpose it may perhaps be sufficient to divide it into the pre-Socratic, the Socratic, and the post-Socratic periods.

(1) The pre-Socratic period is the era of unconscious morality. Human conduct occupies as yet a very secondary

¹ *Autobiography*, pp. 46-48.

² I omit for the moment all reference to the ethics of Buddha.

and subordinate place in men's minds. Such thought on the matter as there is takes the form of popular moralizing; there is no definite and coherent system. It is an age in which, as has been said, Homer occupies the place of the Bible.¹ Yet even at this early period, when the world was but in its moral childhood, the stirrings of a real moral life—a life which owes nothing to the Bible—are plainly to be seen. To this period belong the poetry of Hesiod,² the Sayings of the so-called "Seven Sages,"³ the doctrines of Pythagoras,⁴ and that moral fable entitled "The Choice of Hercules," the lesson of which, John Stuart Mill tells us, his father so impressed upon his mind.⁵ Indeed, without venturing upon debatable ground, it seems safe to assert that however wanting men have been in moral energy, so far as historical evidence goes, there has always been a power of moral insight sufficient to mark the broad distinctions of right and wrong, and to point the way with ever growing clearness towards higher and purer ideals of duty.

(2) Three great names rule the Socratic period: Socrates himself, Plato and Aristotle. To attempt to characterize Socrates as a moral teacher in a sentence, or even in a paragraph, would be absurd. I can only advise the English

¹ Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 19.

² Sir Alexander Grant quotes the passage in which Hesiod makes use of the same figure to represent vice and virtue which was afterwards consecrated in the mouth of Christ: "The road of vice may easily be travelled by crowds, for it is smooth, and she dwells close at hand. But the path of virtue is steep and difficult, and the gods have ordained that only by toil can she be reached." (*Ethics of Aristotle*, Essay ii., p. 56.)

³ For examples of their "prudential ethics dealing in a disjointed but often forcible and pregnant manner with the various parts of life," see the Essay just quoted, p. 57.

⁴ "In his precepts of moderation, courage, loyalty in friendship, obedience to law and government, his recommendation of daily self-examination—even in the rules of abstinence and ceremonial observance which we may believe him to have delivered—we may discern an effort, striking in its originality and earnestness, to mould the lives of men as much as possible into the 'likeness of God.'" (Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 13.)

⁵ *Autobiography*, p. 47. On the fable itself see Grant's Essay, p. 103.

reader who has yet to make his acquaintance with the greatest of the Greeks to begin with Mr. F. J. Church's little volume, *The Trial and Death of Socrates*,¹ in which he will find passages of moral majesty and beauty that have, perhaps, no parallel outside our own sacred Scriptures.² To Plato, the disciple of Socrates, we owe the first statement of the four cardinal virtues—wisdom, courage, temperance and justice—which have figured so largely in all subsequent ethical discussions.³ They embody an ideal which is henceforth constant in all Greek schools of moral thought, and which may be said, perhaps, to arise out of the general moral consciousness of Greece. "A Greek," as one writer puts it, "seems to have been expected to develop these virtues."⁴ And however wide may have

¹ Containing the Euthyphron, Apology, Crito, and Phaedo of Plato.

² I cannot deny myself the delight of transcribing one or two short sentences, familiar as they must already be to many of my readers: "If you were therefore to say to me [Socrates is addressing his judges] 'Socrates, this time we will not listen to Anytus: we will let you go but on this condition, that you cease from carrying on this search of yours, and from philosophy: if you are found following these pursuits, again, you shall die': I say, if you offered to let me go on these terms, I should reply: 'Athenians, I hold you in the highest regard and love, but I will obey God rather than you; and as long as I have breath and strength I will not cease from philosophy, and from exhorting you, and declaring the truth to every one of you whom I meet.' " "Again I proved [he is referring to an incident in his past life] not by mere words, but by my actions, that, if I may use a vulgar expression, I do not care a straw for death; but that I do care very much indeed about not doing anything against the laws of God or man." "I have one request to make of them [his accusers]. When my sons grow up, visit them with punishment, my friends, and vex them in the same way that I have vexed you, if they seem to you to care for riches, or for any other thing, before virtue: and if they think that they are something, when they are nothing at all, reproach them, as I have reproached you, for not caring for what they should, and for thinking that they are great men when in fact they are worthless. And if you will do this, I myself and my sons will have received our deserts at your hands."

³ The familiar fourfold division passed from the Greeks to the Romans, and was very early adopted by the Fathers of the Christian Church. The term "cardinal," however, is Christian, not Greek. It was first used by Ambrose (340-397 A.D.).

⁴ T. B. Strong's *Christian Ethics*, p. 116.

been the gulf between Greek theory and Greek practice the ideal itself remains, an abiding witness to the power and penetration of the natural conscience of man. From Plato we pass to Aristotle, the most distinguished of his many disciples. Now for the first time ethics becomes a distinct and separate science. Not satisfied with his master's list of the cardinal virtues, saying that "people deceived themselves by general definitions," he discourses in masterly analytic fashion on virtues like liberality, high-mindedness, gentleness, agreeableness, truthfulness, and so on.¹ Of all the moral teachers of antiquity none perhaps has so powerfully influenced later and Christian thought as Aristotle. Dante saw in him "the master of the sapient throng,"² and from Thomas Aquinas to our own day thinkers of all schools have gladly owned his sway.³

¹ In the 3rd and 4th books of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

² *Inferno*, iv. 128, Cary's translation.

³ Gladstone's "four doctors," to whom he owed "enormously," were Aristotle, Augustine, Dante, and Butler (*Life*, by J. Morley, vol. i., p. 207). "I never knew a man," Stanley writes of Arnold, "who made such familiar, even fond use of an author: it is scarcely too much to say, that he spoke of him as of one intimately known and valued by him; and when he was selecting his son's University, with much leaning for Cambridge, and many things which at the time made him incline against Oxford, dearly as he loved her, Aristotle turned the scale" (*Life*, pop. ed. p. 9). Still more striking is Maurice's tribute: "I owe unspeakable gratitude," he says, "to the University of Oxford for having put Aristotle's *Ethics* into my hands, and induced me to read it, and to think of it. I doubt if I could have received a greater boon from any university or any teacher. I will tell you what this book did for me. First it assured me that the principles of morals cannot belong to one time or another; that they must belong to all times. Here was an old heathen Greek making me aware of things that were passing within me, detecting my laziness and my insincerity, showing how little I was doing the things which I professed to do, forcing me to confess that with all the advantages which I enjoyed he was better than I was. That was one great thing. Next, I could not but learn from him—for he took immense pains to tell me—that it is not by reading a book or learning a set of maxims by heart that one gets to know anything of morality, that it belongs to life and must be learned in the daily practice of life. English and Christian writers, no doubt, might have told me the same thing. But I am not sure that their words would have gone so much home as Aristotle's did. I might have thought that it was their business, part of their profes-

(3) In the post-Socratic period it must be sufficient to mention the names of three of the great Stoic moralists of the Roman Empire: Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. All belong to the Christian era: Seneca was a contemporary of St. Paul; Epictetus lived through the second half of the first century, Marcus Aurelius until the eighth decade of the second. Yet none of these appears to have taken with any seriousness, or in any way to have been influenced by, the new moral movement which was rapidly making its way in all parts of the Roman Empire. They lived and thought and taught with as little consciousness of the presence of Christianity in their midst as if they had belonged to another planet. Yet nowhere outside the pages of the New Testament is there to be found a nobler, purer, more unworldly morality than that which shines in the *Discourses* of Epictetus and the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. John Wesley expressed the thoughts of many hearts when he wrote, "I read to-day part of the *Meditations of Marcus Antoninus*. What a strange Emperor! and what a strange heathen! giving thanks to God for all the good things he enjoyed! . . . I make no doubt that this is one of those 'many,' who 'shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,' while 'the children of the kingdom,' nominal Christians, are 'shut out.'"¹

II.

The foregoing illustrations, which are presented as illustrations only, and not even as an outline of the vast subject to which they refer, will serve to show to what moral heights Paganism at its best was able to attain. We may now return to the question with which we began: in what relation does Christian morality stand to this pre-

sion, to utter those stern maxims, and to hold up such lofty ideals of conduct." (Quoted in J. S. Blackie's *Four Phases of Morals*, p. 145.)

Journals, vol. i., p. 522.

existing heathen morality? What was the attitude of the first Christian teachers, and of St. Paul in particular, towards the ethical ideas which they found already at work in the world? To answer the question fully would require not one but several answers. In the first place, Christianity filled up that which was lacking in the ideals of antiquity. To the Pagan virtues of honesty, industry, truthfulness, temperance, justice, it added the specifically Christian virtues of humility, forgiveness, patience, love. Furthermore, it so profoundly modified the character of the moral conceptions which it took over from the past that they became in large part new creations. They had henceforth to be defined in relation to an environment of spiritual truth and fact which for pre-Christian moralists did not exist. As Professor Findlay says, "The order and proportion of the virtues was changed; the moral scenery of life was shifted."¹ Or, to use a different figure, the old moral currency was still kept in circulation, but it was gradually minted anew.² The fact, however, upon which I desire to lay special emphasis is this: that Christianity *did* accept and endorse those findings of the natural conscience to which attention has been drawn in the earlier section of this paper. It assumed that man had a knowledge of duty, and the authority of duty, and upon that natural foundation both Christ and His Apostles built.

It may, indeed, seem to some readers of St. Paul's Epistles as if the Apostle were emphatic rather in the total denial of heathen virtue than in the admission and assumption of it. The burning words in which, in his Ephesian Epistle, he describes the "walk" of the Gentiles—"in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated

¹ *Christian Doctrine and Morals*, p. 107.

² Mr. Strong has some forcible remarks on the transformation which the four cardinal virtues of antiquity undergo in the teaching of Thomas Aquinas and the greater schoolmen. See his *Christian Ethics*, p. 141.

from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness"¹—and the still more lurid and detailed account of heathen immorality to be found in the first chapter of Romans form perhaps the most terrible indictment of sinful human nature ever penned. And what is more, the indictment can be substantiated, in every count of it, out of the mouth of contemporary witnesses. Nevertheless the Apostle does not mean, and if we have regard not merely to these passages but to all that he has written, he does not say, that pagan society was so utterly corrupt that it had lost all knowledge of moral good. Bad it undoubtedly was, bad beyond all hope of recovery and renewal from within, and yet not so bad that it had quenched in utter darkness the light "which lighteth every man." When St. Paul says that "when Gentiles which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law unto themselves: in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts";² and when, again, in the same chapter, he remonstrates with the Jew who prides himself on his circumcision, saying, "Shall not the uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who, with the letter and circumcision, art the transgressor of the law?"³ he plainly assumes alike some knowledge and performance of moral duty on the part of heathen men. In another Epistle he rebukes his readers because, Christians though they were, they had sanctioned a form of immorality which even the conscience of the heathen condemned.⁴ And in yet another Epistle he appeals directly to the existing ethical standards of the day as standards for his own converts: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are noble,

¹ Eph. iv. 17-19.

² Rom. ii. 14, 15.

³ *vv.* 25-27.

⁴ 1 Cor. v. 21.

whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”¹ The inference from all this seems plain and unmistakable: to St. Paul and the first Christians, to live in conformity with the Divine will meant, as McGiffert says, to live in conformity with the dictates of the universal human conscience. It meant, of course, much more than this; but it never meant less than this. If honesty, industry, truthfulness, temperance, justice were binding on a heathen, still more were they on a Christian, and no properly instructed Christian could suffer himself to think or speak lightly of them. In a word, and to repeat what has already been said, natural morality was the foundation which the Apostles assumed and upon which they built.²

If, then, such is the relation of the Pauline morality to the virtues which are recognized as virtues by all men, these latter deserve a place in the minds of all Christian

¹ Phil. iv. 8. See McGiffert's *Apostolic Age*, p. 507.

² “Suppose,” says Professor Knight, “a cultivated Athenian youth in the first century—who had been educated in the Academic or Stoical philosophy, and had consistently practised the virtues of these systems—to have embraced Christianity on conviction, what would happen? The old virtues of his Academic or Stoical novitiate would not be uprooted or extinguished. He would continue to practise them, but they would immediately undergo a transformation. It is possible that, for a time, they would have no special interest to him, because of the new attraction he had found in Christianity; but he could never despise them, if his life had been either noble or genuine before. To have done so would have been to act the part of traitor; and to be disloyal, not only to his past career, but to the divinity working within him. The old virtues would be displaced, but not destroyed; and the Christian Ethic came, to the disciples of earlier systems, ‘not to destroy, but to fulfil’—in other words, to evoke the good it found, and to transfigure it by its alliance with other truths which it disclosed, and the fresh life it unfolded.” (*The Christian Ethic*, p. 62.) To this extent we may readily admit the truth of Mill's contention that the Gospel always refers to a pre-existing morality, and that consequently the New Testament neither contains, nor claims to contain, a complete system of ethical doctrine. (See *Essay On Liberty*, pop. ed. p. 28.)

men, and especially of all Christian teachers, which they have by no means always received. Dean Church remarked once of Dean Stanley that whatever may have been his limitations he did thoroughly understand "the value of the great virtues, justice, veracity, courage, and their essential connexion with the Christian type of character."¹ But it is just this "essential connexion" which is so imperfectly realized by many Christians. Thus, e.g., it is sometimes said, and not wholly without truth, that courage is more highly esteemed without than within the Church. As Dr. Dale half paradoxically puts it, "Some people who pass for very good Christians would be very poor Pagans."² Yet these things ought not so to be. When the morality of the religious falls below that of the irreligious, Christ is wounded in the house of His friends. We need to-day an ethical revival within the Church. We must emphasize anew the great old virtues to which even the natural, un-Christianized conscience bears its witness. We must tell men plainly that they may be "religious," but that if they cheat and lie, if they incur debts which they have no means of paying, if they neglect public duty, not because they are unfitted for it, but because they prefer a life of selfish ease, they break Christ's commandments, they are none of His. Worse symptoms of a Church's decay than deserted sanctuaries and empty treasuries are the softening of the moral fibre, the blurring of the moral vision of her children. Nay, we may crowd our churches and fill our treasuries, but if we are powerless to make bad men good and good men better, our strength is gone from us; wickedness and

¹ *Life and Letters of Dean Church*, p. 249.

² *Lectures on Preaching*, p. 248. See also the opening chapters of the same writer's *Evangelical Revival and other Sermons*. It is greatly to be regretted, especially in the light of Dale's own statement, that, with the exception of his book on the Atonement, he had never published anything with a graver sense of responsibility, or with a deeper desire to secure a hearing (see *Life*, p. 350), that this volume should have been allowed to go out of print.

worship God cannot away with. Let us not judge one another, but rather let us judge ourselves, and "let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

III.

In order to illustrate still further what has been said above let us take the virtue to which reference has just been made—the virtue, i.e., of courage—and briefly compare its place in the ethical systems of antiquity with that which it holds in the teaching of St. Paul. Now among the ancients courage was the chief of virtues. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* it stands first and receives the fullest exposition. Virtue = *virtus* = valour: there is a world of significance in the simple etymology. We must take care, however, not to read into the word the larger and fuller meaning which it has come to possess in later times. With rare exceptions the heroes of antiquity were its warriors. The brave man was he who went forth to die for his fatherland on the field of battle. Of one ancient poet indeed (Simonides) it has been said that heroism was in his eyes almost the sum total of possible human excellence.¹ Organized as human society then was, i.e. almost exclusively with a view to military success, such a limited conception was perhaps inevitable; none the less must the limitation be kept in mind in any comparison between ancient and Christian ideals.

When we turn to the New Testament, though the war-like associations of the words drop out of sight, the ideal, heightened and purified, still remains. There is, assuredly, no comfort for cowards here, and least of all in the life and words of St. Paul. "God," says the Apostle, in his last letter to Timothy, "gave us not a spirit of fearfulness," or cowardice (*δειλία*)²; and on that saying his whole life is one long and noble commentary.

¹ Grant's *Ethics of Aristotle*, vol. i. p. 63.

² Tim. i. 7. Note too that at the head of the list of those whose part

“God gave us not the spirit of cowardice”:—there is, as Bishop Paget truly says, almost a touch of irony in the vast understatement of the case.¹ Did the Apostle call to mind what he had told the Corinthians? He was the last man in the world to make parade of what he had borne for Christ’s sake and the gospel’s; but once in self-defence the facts were wrung from him and they were such as these: “In labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep, in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.”² “A spirit of cowardice,” indeed! St. Paul’s life as an Apostle began in one supreme act of moral courage. The world is wont to look with questioning eyes on any man who suddenly espouses a cause of which before he had been an unrelenting foe—“and this wise world of ours is mainly right”—but when the change is made in the light of day, with no mean and pitiful excuses, under the sheer pressure of conscientious conviction, we can and do admire; for there is no nobler form of courage than that of the man who will stand up before his fellows and say with his finger on his own past, “It is all wrong, a bad, bad blunder; fool and blind that I was that I did not see it sooner; but I see it now. Henceforth till set of sun I will toil to right the wrong I did. So help me God!” It was in this spirit that Saul took up the tasks of his new life: “Straightway in

is “in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone” the book of Revelation (xxi. 9) sets “the fearful,” the cowardly (*oi δειδοί*).

¹ *Studies in Christian Character*, p. 107.

² 2 Cor. xi. 23–27.

the synagogues," we read, "he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God. And all that heard him were amazed. . . . But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ." In the very city to which he had come armed with authority to bring bound to Jerusalem "any that were of the Way, whether men or women," there, as Barnabas reported of him to the Apostles, he preached boldly in the name of Jesus.¹ His whole apostolic career was cast in the same heroic mould. The breadth of spiritual daring, which led him, like another Alexander, to plan the conquest of the whole world only fails to impress us because we have grown so familiar with its results. Wherever we meet him, in the presence of friends or foes, of individuals or a crowd, of a Roman governor or a Roman jailor, he is always the same courageous, resourceful leader. With a brave man's impatience of weaklings he refused to take Mark as his travelling-companion the second time when once the latter had failed him, and separated from Barnabas rather than yield the point.² He did not hesitate even to resist to the face St. Peter himself, when that Apostle "walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel."³ At Lystra he was stoned and dragged out of the city as if dead. But the next day he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. "And when they had preached the gospel to that city . . . they returned to Lystra."⁴ What a glimpse of quiet, unbending courage does that simple sentence of the historian give us! Or take this from the

¹ Acts ix. 2, 20-22, 27.

² Acts xv. 37-39.

³ Gal. ii. 11-14.

⁴ Acts xiv. 19-21. Readers of the *Pilgrim's Progress* will recall Bunyan's description of the man with a stout countenance, who came up to him with the inkhorn, saying, "Set down my name, sir," and then began to cut his way through the armed men into the palace. "Then Christian smiled, and said, I think verily I know the meaning of this." The marginal note refers us to the incident at Lystra, which is quoted above. "To Bunyan courage is the root of all virtue." (See *John Bunyan*, by the author of *Mark Rutherford*, p. 125).

Apostle's own pen: "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for . . . *there are many adversaries.*"¹ The very gravity of the peril is only another reason why he should stick to his post. Like some great soldiers, St. Paul's courage rose to its highest when the bullets sang around him, and the dangers in front began to thicken. It is needless to multiply illustrations, though many more might be quoted.² Only one word need be added: courage with St. Paul did not mean absence of fear. As Aristotle says, a man may appear to be brave simply because he does not see his danger. But the Apostle's keen eye swept the whole field, and sometimes with a sinking heart. "Without were fightings, within were fears," he told the Corinthians, as he called to mind one of the darkest hours of his life.³ When he left Athens it was "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."⁴ "Pray for me," he said to his converts, "pray for me, that I may make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, that I may speak boldly as I ought to speak";⁵ as though the one thing which he feared might fail him was his courage. And three times at least did his Lord stand by him in the night, saying, "Be not afraid," "Courage!" "Fear not, Paul."⁶ Not to feel no fear, but to refuse to yield to it, to rise superior to it and overcome it—this is the spirit of the truly brave man, and this was the spirit of St. Paul."⁷

¹ 1 Cor. xvi. 8-9.

² See, e.g., the account of St. Paul's behaviour during the tumult at Ephesus (Acts xix. 30-31), the riot at Jerusalem (xxi., xxii.), or the storm at sea (xxvii.) There is a characteristic paragraph on the moral courage displayed by the Apostle at Athens in Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's *Morning Lands of History*, p. 131.

³ 2 Cor. vii. 5.

⁴ 1 Cor. ii. 3.

⁵ Eph. vi. 19-20.

⁶ Acts xviii. 9; xxiii. 11; xxvii. 24.

⁷ As an illustration of the way in which fear and true courage may dwell together in the heart of the same man, especially if he be of a highly imaginative temperament, I may perhaps refer to one of the most striking of recent works of fiction, Mr. A. E. W. Mason's *Four Feathers*.

Mr. Lecky thinks that with the growth of civilization there is an inevitable decline of the spirit of heroism. As society passes from the military to the more peaceful stages, the atmosphere, while more congenial to some virtues, becomes less so to the heroic.¹ Whatever truth there may be in this contention must lie within very narrow limits. Indeed, it reads very much like a revival of the old pagan idea, that heroes are to be looked for only on the field of battle. The changed conditions of modern life happily present to but few, and that at comparatively rare intervals, such opportunities for the display of individual heroism as, in earlier and fiercer times, came to men daily and unsought. And yet it may well be questioned if even war has ever been as great a school of heroism as is the peaceful life of our organized industrial communities to-day, and whether in the simple annals of the poor there may not be read by understanding eyes and hearts the record of quiet, unflinching heroisms, shown not in some "crowded hour of glorious life," but through the long monotony of the years, which far outshine the glittering triumphs of the stricken field. The philosopher of Concord comes nearer the heart of the matter than the English historian: "Times of heroism," says Emerson, "are generally times of terror, but the day never shines in which this element may not work. The circumstances of men, we say, are historically somewhat better in this country, and at this hour, than perhaps ever before. More freedom exists for culture. It will not now run against the axe at the first step out of the beaten track of opinion, but whoso is heroic will always find crises to try his edge. Human virtue demands her champions and martyrs, and the trial of persecution always proceeds."²

¹ *History of European Morals*, vol. i. pp. 130, 187 and 223.

² *Essay on Heroism*.