

severe discipline, having his muscles trained to endurance, that he may run and wrestle in the joy of his strength, and win the laurel crown. And so we find him constantly appealing to moral courage, as when he says to his young friend Timothy: "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ"; or again, "Exercise thyself unto godliness."

A well-known proverb assures us that "it is easier to preach than to practise." Perhaps, a still better statement of the case would be that it is even harder to practise than to preach, for preaching is hard enough, and if anyone thinks it is not, let him try it month after month and year after year. We need to be inspired by example. We need also to be inspired by precept, and it is a noble task to stir up, by ringing words of earnest sincerity the highest faculties of our nature. The ideal of life thus set forth by any ardent mind may well be in advance of personal attainment; but the whole current of action must tend that way, or mere words will be almost valueless.

And it is this union of practice with theory which gives such force to the teaching of the Apostle Paul. We are apt to think of him as so absorbingly devoted to his great mission that virtue became a kind of second nature without any trouble at all. But if we study his letters, we shall find that this opinion is scarcely confirmed by them. It is true, indeed, that he possessed a sensitive conscience which kept him from the grosser forms of evil; but he was a man of the nervous, impulsive temperament—a good temperament to have if you can manage it, but by no means an easy one to manage. If we suppose that Paul was a narrow fanatic, who had neither eyes nor ears for anything outside his special enthusiasm, we have failed to comprehend the many-sidedness which gives him a place among the world's great reformers. His tremendous power of concentration was the result of deliberate training. His bodily presence, he tells us, was weak, and his speech contemptible; but what there was of him was alive at all points, and there was a great deal of him too when you looked below mere superficial appearances. He was a close student, yet not a recluse; a mystic, but not an idle dreamer. That fiery zeal which once persecuted the church burned within him to the end, and while it enabled him to perform herculean labours for Christianity, necessitated that continuous self-discipline which should round and complete them all. His emotional nature was not less strongly marked than his intellectual, and he had to buffet his body and bring it into bondage, lest having preached to others he himself should be rejected.

It may be some comfort to know that one whose name has become immortal through his devoted

Christian life and labors did not by any means consider himself removed beyond the ordinary weaknesses and temptations of humanity. Goodness is not an official perquisite. It is not the property of a class. Even an apostle may fall. None are exempt from the friction of some kind of trial which will test the strength of manhood. Virtue is not an accident, but an achievement. It will not come by chance. It will not come by lazily wishing for it. It will not come by the vain attempt to prolong the period of unconscious innocence. To know the difference between right and wrong, to feel, perhaps, a strong impulse towards the wrong, yet none the less to do the right, that is virtue. And such a triumph, it goes almost without saying, must involve constant self-discipline. Many tendencies of our own nature rise in rebellion against it. Many of the world's maxims laugh it to scorn. We shall not glide into the kingdom of heaven as a vessel with fair wind and clear sky glides into harbour. Through storm and stress, by rocks and quicksands, in the starless night, as well as in the radiant moon-tide, the ship of life pursues her perilous way. It is no sinecure to be a Christian. Sometimes the ideal seems like a vanishing *Ignis Fatuus* which mocks the ardent pursuer.

"We do not see it where it is,
At the beginning of the race;
As we proceed, it shifts its place,
And where we looked for crowns to fall,
We find the tug 's to come, that's all."

Nor is there anything anomalous about this. We admit the necessity for a certain amount of physical exercise in order to the very maintenance of life. There is a wide-spread passion for certain kinds of athleticism. Though the ancient glory is gone, Greece has recently made an almost pathetic effort to revive the splendour of the great Olympiads. Even some seats of learning are as well known from the successes on the campus as from the culture of the class rooms. And though, possibly, we may sometimes go too far in these matters, the roughness of our favourite sports is itself a tribute to the firm-set, stalwart young manhood which loves to revel in them. It is a good thing for the world that some voices, at least, can grow hilarious over a football struggle, and shout themselves hoarse in the wild delight of victory. We must all have some physical exercise if we are to maintain our vigour. There is no need to fall into vicious courses. Simple neglect of the bodily demand for fresh air and motion and some variety of discipline is sure, in the long run, to have a bad effect upon us.

Not less imperative is some measure of mental exercise. There is, no doubt, much difference of intellectual gifts among men, but there is still greater difference in the use made of what they have. God