

go away.<sup>1</sup> If we may assume that *huldubbū* stands here for *maš-huldubbū*, then we might infer that in the month Adar the Babylonians instituted a day of atonement.<sup>2</sup>

In THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, vol. xxii. No. 8, I have already called attention to a passage of a Babylonian ritual for the purification of a temple.<sup>3</sup> To avoid redundancy I shall not repeat the translation here. In this passage the priest of incanta-

tion apparently touches<sup>4</sup> various parts of a shrine with a decapitated goat, incenses the building with a censer,<sup>5</sup> and carries the goat out of the city (Babylon) toward the west and throws it in the river Nala, after which he must remain outside the city seven days.<sup>6</sup>

The material discussed in this article is exhaustive at the present stage of Assyriological information. I trust that the inferences and parallels which have been drawn are not unwarranted, and that the material will be of service in the study of this form of ancient magic.

<sup>4</sup> This is evidently the meaning of *ukappar* in this passage.

<sup>5</sup> *niknakku*, censer, not 'platter,' as Professor Rogers translates, *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, p. 197. For the meaning of *niknakku*, v. *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, 1909, 75 ff.

<sup>6</sup> See also Rogers, *l.c.*

<sup>1</sup> *hul-dub è-ba-ra*, Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, No. 24, Rev. 9; cf. Behrens, in *Leipziger Semitische Studien*, ii. pt. 1. p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> References to the scape-goat *mašhuldubbū* occur in Zimmern, *Ritual Tafeln*, No. 26, i. 20, ii. 4; and No. 54, i. 19; also in K. 9287, i. 11, *Revue Semitique*, vol. ix. (Boissier).

<sup>3</sup> *Revue d'Assyriologie*, viii. 49, 10-20, text published by Dhorme.

## The Great Text Commentary.

### THE GREAT TEXTS OF CORINTHIANS.

#### I COR. XV. 58.

Wherefore (A.V., therefore), my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.

I. THESE words close the marvellous chapter in which Christ's rising from the dead is set forth as the great fact without which the Gospel would be no Gospel at all, and in which His return to life is declared to be the promise that we too shall rise again. That chapter passes through several changing moods of feeling. In it St. Paul sometimes argues, sometimes delivers a message as with authority from above, sometimes tells what has already happened, sometimes declares beforehand what is yet to come, sometimes almost fiercely rebukes, sometimes cheers with stirring words of encouragement. Towards the end he rises into an exulting hymn of praise. Beyond that we might think he could not go. We might expect him to leave off there on the highest stretch of uplifted feeling. Or if he had reasons for not pausing there, we might think that at least the Church in her burial service might well have broken off there, and sent forth the mourners with that song of triumph ringing in their ears as the last sounds

heard before they leave the house of God. But no! St. Paul does not stop there, and the Church does not stop there. Calmer and quieter words follow, words of encouragement but also of command, which lead our thoughts away from the sorrow of the present and the hope of the future, and fix them on the work of this present life which still lies before us who remain.

One of the fairest flowers in the Alps blooms on the verge of the eternal snow. Around it, like the sheeted dead, the great mountains lie, silent and motionless, while this one sign of life blossoms into a loveliness all the more striking from contrast with the gaunt and dreary barrenness which it invades. So these brave words, bracing our hearts afresh for present duty, bloom, like that Alpine flower, on the very fringe of death. They conclude a chapter which, more than any other in the Bible, links itself in with our saddest and most solemn memories. Here, I think, we have one proof among many of St. Paul's surpassing skill in generalship. It is said that the true soldier displays his genius not so much by winning the victory as by following that victory up when it is won. An inferior commander would have suffered his troops to rest upon the great triumph with which the chapter draws to a close. After crying 'thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ,' how natural, and how welcome sweet repose would have been. But St. Paul knew that the moment of victory is often the most opportune for pushing forward; and into that one connecting word 'wherefore' he pressed the whole

force of the previous argument. The sober strain into which the masterly demonstration runs is like the course of the river, deep and strong, below the cataract. All the passion of the waters pours itself into that narrow channel. Because of all that has just been proved, 'wherefore,' adds the Apostle, 'be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.'<sup>1</sup>

## I.

## Wherefore.

1. 'Wherefore.'—Seldom, even in Scripture, has a single word been laden with so heavy a burden as this 'Wherefore.' It is a summary and recapitulation of all that has gone before. It is as though the Apostle had said: If you accept the authority of Holy Scripture, and the imperative necessity of its accomplishment and fulfilment: if, dealing with men who, singly and collectively, would be accepted in any court of justice as competent and credible witnesses, you are not going to charge such men with collusion, delusion, or illusion; if, in spite of the difficulties of belief, you are still unwilling to take refuge in the far greater difficulties of unbelief; if, thus accepting as a fact the resurrection of the Christ, you have realized the meaning of that one great word, 'Christ the firstfruits,' a phrase to be measured and pondered as something much more than a metaphor or figure of speech, yea, it may be a strictly scientific fact, a fact which in itself asserts at once the truth and the doctrine of this Gospel which I preach; if these things, I say, have their lessons for you, as they ought to have for all whose 'heaven-taught eyes' are opened, so that all Nature wears, so to speak, a sacramental aspect, 'outward and visible things the type and evidence of things within the veil'; then, 'my beloved brethren' (for so he addresses them, heretics and unorthodox and unbelievers as they are, yet will he not count any one of them as an enemy, but will rather admonish him as a brother), 'be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.'

To me the most impressive word in the Bible is the 'Therefore' in the last verse of the fifteenth chapter of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. The chapter transcends in grandeur everything else in the literature of all

lands and ages. When I read portions of it as I stand by the lifeless form to be borne forth for burial, I always feel as if I were marshalling a triumphal procession over conquered death and the grave robbed of its prey. The Apostle rears a ladder from earth to heaven, its foot planted against the great stone rolled from the Saviour's sepulchre, its topmost round resting on the sapphire throne; and on rungs that are successive day-beams of the resurrection morning he leads up his tried, tempted, persecuted, death-bound fellow-disciples to those serene celestial heights where they die no more, and are as the angels of God. But he was not the man to show gems and jewels of priceless worth and amaranthine beauty merely to feast the beholder's eye, and to wake idle dreams of heaven. When he has brought his readers to the very threshold of the golden gates, he converts the glorious vision into a working force. He swoops down, and brings them down with him from the realm beyond the clouds to the dim and dusty plain of common life and daily duty. 'Therefore' (and the whole power of the world to come is condensed in this single word), 'therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.'<sup>2</sup>

2. 'Wherefore.'—What are the facts from which St. Paul draws this conclusion?

(1) *Christ has risen.*—This is the fact which the Apostle has been declaring. And for that fact he renders thanks to God in the immediately preceding verse, 'which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.' What, then, is the victory? Who are the enemies that are triumphed over? First, death and the grave; next, sin, and the Law as the strength of sin.

(2) *Christ is living.*—It might be asked, How should this victorious Son of God affect me? How can I share His victory? How does the conquering power affect these masses of men, sinners and careless ones? And the Apostle answers with the doctrine of grace. He who has lived this wonderful life and is now in glory in His perfect manhood is not outside us as a mere example, a picture to be copied, but by His Spirit He enters in to transform our poor weak nature and to renew our minds. He is the Lord from heaven, who is changing the body of our humiliation, and making it like unto His glorious body by the power where-with He subdues all things unto Himself. But it is the Resurrection that alone makes such a doctrine intelligible. Christ would be no Second Adam were He a dead man. It is because He is alive—raised, a spiritual body with a new life that comes from God Himself—that He is the fountain of grace pouring Himself into His members, the living Church which is His Body.

<sup>1</sup> T. H. Pattison, *The South Wind*, 61.

<sup>2</sup> A. P. Peabody, *King's Chapel Sermons*, 26.

(3) *We shall rise.*—You find this in the 19th verse of the chapter: 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.' And again, in the 32nd verse, he says, 'If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?' And then, quoting from a heathen poet, he says, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' But if there be immortality—if there be something beyond the grave that will compensate for all earth's sorrows—if there be something in the 'hereafter' that will more than make amends for all the trials of the 'here'—if there be a world to come that shall more than compensate for all that may be endured in this—then let us be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Light is our sorrow for it ends to-morrow,  
Light is our death which cannot hold us fast;  
So brief a sorrow can be scarcely sorrow,  
Or death be death so quickly past.

One night, no more, of pain that turns to pleasure,  
One night, no more, of weeping, weeping sore;  
And then the heaped-up measure beyond measure,  
In quietness for evermore.

Our face is set like flint against our trouble,  
Yet many things there are which comfort us;  
This bubble is a rainbow-coloured bubble,  
This bubble-life tumultuous.

Our sails are set to cross the tossing river,  
Our face is set to reach Jerusalem;  
We toil awhile, but then we rest for ever,  
Sing with all Saints and rest with them.<sup>1</sup>

## II.

### Be ye steadfast, unmoveable.

'Be ye steadfast, unmoveable.'—This is to be the first characteristic of our 'Labour in the Lord.' It is to be persistent, and consistent. As little as possible is it to admit the element of fitful and uncertain fluctuations: energy to-day, languor to-morrow; sounding programmes, lean and half-hearted performance; retreat in face of discouragements before they have been steadily met and firmly dealt with. If the expression may be allowed, the true Christian is to display a holy *obstinacy* in the work of the Lord. Having the goal of his service clear and bright in view, he is

<sup>1</sup> Christina G. Rossetti, *Poems*, 122.

to labour on towards it with a resolve unshaken. To him it is to be *the* work of life. He is to turn aside to no secondary ambitions and treat them as if first. 'This one thing' he does, till his working-day is done; steadfast, unmovable; the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow—in this respect, that he lives as one who exists to do the will of God.

(1) *Stedfast.*—The two words 'stedfast' and 'unmoveable' are not mere echoes the one of the other; but (so far as we can learn), in the mind of the Apostle each pointed to a distinct source of peril to the believer. The exhortation to be 'stedfast' was needed because of the dangers lurking within the soul of the Corinthian. A nature such as his, intensely active, absorbed, and interested in the labours of the hour, would, all too soon, strike deep roots in the present. There would be no upward-glancing eye; no forward-hastening foot; no hand outstretched, even now, to touch the goal and grasp the prize which as yet were invisible. So, before he was himself aware of it, that Corinthian believer would be 'moved away from the hope of the gospel.' We learn here, from the order in which this entreaty comes, where our most serious peril lies. If we be established in ourselves, all the onsets of external fires, so far from moving us, will only serve to make us still more strong in our position; but if we, like the Corinthians, have loosened our moorings in the deep sea of truth, then we also shall be torn from our anchorage and, like that hopeless vessel in the Adriatic which carried St. Paul towards Rome, shall be driven before the wind and 'exceedingly tossed with the tempest.'

'Stedfast' is a word which occurs elsewhere in the New Testament and is thus consistently rendered. It is a word which expresses the resoluteness of the man who has a mind of his own and a will of his own, but who has power over his own will. It is a word which expresses not obstinate determination but firm resolution, conviction as the result, not of the testimony of others, but of personal experience. 'Now we believe,' said the men of Samaria, not because of the saying of this woman who has told us of what the Lord has done for her soul, but 'because we have heard for ourselves.' Such steadfastness, such reasoned and rational conviction, is it not a thing worth having—a personal creed, and not merely a traditional belief?

You may love warmly, but what is your love worth if you presently forget all about it, and do the very thing which will wound the one whom you profess to love? What is your love worth, if when you are away you are at the mercy of every sharp temptation that assails you? What is your love worth at best, if you cannot be trusted as soon as you have been out of sight for a little while? You may repent with much sorrow; but what is your sorrow or your repentance worth if the fault is presently to be repeated? You may resolve nobly and enthusiastically; but what is your enthusiasm and your resolution worth, if it cannot uphold you when you come to action? The one thing which all men will ask of you before they can have much to do with you will be, where and how far you may be trusted. Till they know that, they cannot admit you to any confidence at all. As far as they know that, they can be on friendly terms, perhaps more, on terms of friendship. If you cannot be trusted at all, you are worse to your fellow-creatures than a wild beast. So, too, is it in our relations with God. If you are to be His in any sense, you must learn to be trustworthy. You must learn to obey the bidding of duty even when you are left entirely to yourself. You must learn to care for His will even when you are strongly tempted to disregard it, and when no punishment seems likely to follow your disregard. You must learn to think about His will even when it seems quite impossible that disobedience should be detected. You must learn to obey in little trifles, which no one will notice, and all the more because no one will notice them.<sup>1</sup>

(2) **Unmoveable.**—With the word ‘unmoveable’ we are led to think of foes that are outside the soul of the believer. How hard it must have been in a city like Corinth to keep alive this great faith in the coming and Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. No Church pointed heavenward, no Sabbath bells rang out upon the tranquil air, no day of worship indeed was recognized as distinctly Christian, no graves bore inscriptions full of ‘that blessed hope’; beyond that glorious blue sky there seemed no ‘heaven of heavens,’ beyond the glowing sunset of to-day no sure and certain day-break on an eternal morrow.

This word does not occur elsewhere in the New Testament. It is, however, a good classical word which denotes the stability of that which is not to be moved from place to place. Thus by a figure it represents the fixedness of the man who, firm in his own conviction, is not to be led aside or led astray by the plausible suggestions, the doubtful objections, the seductive reasonings of others. ‘Unmoveable.’ It is like that other word of exhortation which we have from the Apostle in another place, ‘that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every

<sup>1</sup> Archbishop Temple.

wind of doctrine,’ double-minded, unstable, mere reeds shaken with the wind.

Steadfastness relates to an inward quality. It is the mind’s control of itself. ‘Unmoveable’ draws our attention rather to that which comes from without—the opposition which has to be met, and exhorts us to resist it; this opposition has not yet passed away. It was indeed a sad trial that the early Christians had to undergo. Their lives were always in jeopardy. They had to be unmovable amidst fire, and sword, and wild beasts; and the prospect of death was ever before them; and yet the Apostle says, ‘Beloved brethren, be unmoveable,’ for greater is He who is with you than all that can be against you. He will strengthen you in regard to this opposition, and you will come out more than conquerors through Him who loved you.

This is the quality portrayed in Ruskin’s description of Botticelli’s ‘Fortitude,’ ‘What is chiefly notable in her is—that you would not, if you had to guess who she was, take her for Fortitude at all. Everybody else’s Fortitudes announce themselves clearly and proudly. They have tower-like shields, and lion-like helmets—and stand firm astride on their legs, and are confidently ready for all comers.

But Botticelli’s Fortitude is no match, it may be, for any that are coming. Worn, somewhat; and not a little weary, instead of standing ready for all comers, she is sitting,—apparently in reverie, her fingers playing restlessly and idly—nay, I think—even nervously—about the hilt of her sword.

For her battle is not to begin to-day: nor did it begin yesterday. Many a morn and eve have passed since it began; and now—is this to be the ending day of it? And if this—by what manner of end?

That is what Sandro’s Fortitude is thinking, and the playing fingers about the sword-hilt would fain let it fall, if it might be: and yet, how swiftly and gladly will they close on it, when the far-off trumpet blows, which she will hear through all her reverie.<sup>1</sup>

Be ‘stedfast, unmoveable,’ says the Apostle. How could we be, unless we had committed ourselves to faith in the Person of Christ, unless we believed that He really is the Son of God, with power? As we look on the world, with its awful problems of sin and misery, as we walk about in an atmosphere of worldly, careless rejection of God, what can keep us firm but the belief that Jesus is the Son of God? For what does that mean but this, that once for all there has been revealed and manifested the True and Perfect Life of Manhood, that in our Lord we do see God’s ideal for Man, that this spotless Human Nature is a permanent reality? It is alive for evermore. We who have once seen the glory of His Manhood can never believe that there is any other answer to the question of what man ought to be. He is the eternal standard of Humanity. He is the normal Man; the

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Works*, xxiii. 334.

men we see are abnormal. But it is the Resurrection that makes this a ground of hope and keeps us steadfast to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### III.

#### Always abounding in the work of the Lord.

We are wont to think that the Church of Christ divides itself into two armies, the active and the passive; or, as they are here described, those who are 'steadfast and unmoveable,' and those who are 'always abounding in the work of the Lord.' But this division is artificial and false. The truly consecrated Christian course is not one only, but both of these. It is like the boat which, while firmly anchored in the harbour, swings loose and free with the tide. He alone is really active in the work of the Lord who, in the calm and silent depths of his nature, is steadfast and unmovable; and he alone is really steadfast whose inmost soul is like the axle of the wheel which, while motionless itself, is nevertheless the centre of motion.

1. **Always abounding.**—The work of the Lord was not to be done by fits and starts, taking turns with self-seeking for profit or for pleasure, but always as the one true blessed business of life. They were to abound in it, to let it flow over in the cheerful bounty of a willing mind. It was not to be done scantily, with close reckoning of thus much and no more. They were not to be thinking how soon they might give up doing the work of the Lord, and turn to other work for themselves. This grudging and bargaining temper was altogether out of place in men's dealings with God, whose gifts are all gifts of free grace, and whose work draws into itself all human work that is work indeed and not vanity or destruction. In making His work their one object in life, putting duty in the place of self-seeking in all things, they would be in the one right way, and find that He takes better care of His children than they can ever take of themselves.

This word 'abounding' was the most expressive word that could have been found for the purpose which St. Paul had in view. It means 'over and above,' 'exceeding in number and in measure,' 'more than enough.' The grace to which the Corinthians were urged was not simply continuance. We know how, in the fierce competition of trade, the business must not merely hold its

own; it must make inroads upon the territory around it; it must be for ever devising some new departure.

The word used in Greek for 'abounding' is the word used when they took up twelve baskets full of fragments which were over and above. There is not much over and above our ordinary Christian life. Talk about our 'cup running over'!—there is seldom in it more than the dregs; we very rarely reach the brim. Now my distinct judgment is that the blessing we give to other people is that which overflows from our own wealth; the man who is in abundant health, with the smile upon his face, living with abundant wealth behind him, blesses other people. He who, living hand to mouth, finds it difficult to make the two ends meet in the spiritual life, who is always falling to rise again—but to fall also—the man who is living below God's highest standard and is satisfied with it, is not the man who can bless others. We do not abound; we do not pour forth water. It has to be pumped up; it is not like a fountain that rushes out. There is an evident drain and strain and stress and difficulty in producing the effect, instead of its coming naturally, with a volume and force of the ocean breaker.<sup>2</sup>

2. **Work.**—We may often hear it said in the present day that our Christian faith concerns only another and distant life, whereas what men need from a faith is that it should exercise power over them and their doings in this present life. Nor can it be denied that this sort of language finds much excuse in a way of thinking and speaking which is only too common among Christians. But it is entirely untrue as applied to the Christian faith as believed and taught by St. Paul and the other Apostles. Nowhere in the New Testament is the resurrection to a future life so largely spoken of or so strongly insisted on as in this great chapter of 1 Cor., and yet the lesson drawn as the conclusion of the whole is a lesson about the work of the present, about steadfastness in work, unstinting energy in work, hopefulness in work.

What are we set on earth for? Say, to toil;  
Nor seek to leave thy tending of the vines,  
For all the heat o' the day, till it declines,  
And Death's mild curfew shall from work assoil.  
God did anoint thee with His odorous oil,  
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns  
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,  
For younger fellow-workers of the soil  
To wear for amulets. So others shall  
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,  
From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,  
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.  
The least flower, with a brimming cup, may stand,  
And share its dewdrop with another near.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. Adderley, *A New Earth*, 181.

<sup>2</sup> F. B. Meyer,

<sup>3</sup> E. B. Browning,

3. **The work of the Lord.**—We must take care here lest we take an insufficient and partial view of the Apostle's meaning. By 'the work of the Lord,' St. Paul intended us to understand the whole Christian life, active and passive. Life to him was a work, an edifice upon which he laboured continually, and in which his to-days and yesterdays were 'the stones with which he built.' Our conception of 'the work of the Lord,' so far as we personally are engaged in it, is of something to which we turn in moments of leisure or in hours of special earnestness. St. Paul's conception of the work of the Lord was that it was 'the life which he lived in the flesh.'

In one of the old convents of Italy they still show the humble cell where a famous painter lived and laboured many centuries ago, the poor, narrow home which only the brethren of his own order were wont to enter. On the walls of that cell he put his finest work, covering them with 'luminous frescoes, beautiful beyond the power of words to describe.' Here, rather than in the pictures which went abroad and made his name illustrious, he was seen to the best advantage, for here it was that his whole life was spent. This was indeed himself. And was not this just the thought upon which our Lord laid such emphatic stress, when, in the prospect of the cross, He said, 'I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do?' The work of the Lord was the life of the Lord; and with ourselves, in like manner, the work of the Lord is the whole Christian life, lived in the spirit and spent in the service of the Master.

#### IV.

##### Your labour is not vain in the Lord.

1. The work is the Lord's, St. Paul would say; the labour is yours, but it is not vain labour. No one who has any manhood in him can ever think labour in itself a hardship. Few things worth doing can be done without labour; and on the other hand labour is necessary for the moral and spiritual health of our own inward selves. But it is no less true that there is nothing so disheartening as the feeling that labour is in vain. While we look only to the outward appearance, we must often have this sad and damping fear. The world is full of chances which thwart our best chosen plans, and bring them, as it seems, to nought. Then death comes perhaps when we seem to have only just begun, at all events long before we have made all secure. So the labour of a life appears to be well-nigh or quite lost, and on a smaller scale the same experience appears to repeat itself day by day. Not so. St. Paul would bid us remember, if we have faith in Christ's resurrection,

and in all that is involved in it. That declares to us that seeming death is the beginning of a better life, seeming failure the first and necessary step towards a more perfect success. The new life, the new success may in outer shape be unlike anything that we have dreamed; but they are not the less true. Now that He has conquered death for us, that victory enables us, nay, commands us, to look on all human doings with quite other eyes. While it deepens all responsibilities, it lights them up with the vision of heavenly purposes and heavenly powers. No labour done in the Lord, as by willing and loving servants of a loved and trusted master, without eager anxiety to seize on credit or on profit for ourselves, but with simple readiness to do a part, though it be the humblest in the great joint work—no such labour is ever lost. It bears fruit to life eternal: fruit not seldom in the outward growth of the Divine Kingdom; fruit often in the spirits of others who see what we think God alone sees; fruit always in the training and ripening of our own spirits towards greater likeness to God and more helpful service of men.

2. There are two factors in all right work for the Lord.

(1) There is, first, the desire for ourselves. Christ retained our individuality, not towards man, where it would tend to selfishness, but towards God, where it must tend to become more and more loving. He linked each soul directly to its heavenly Father; He made all life intensely personal in its relation to God. 'You are you,' He would say, 'always to God. Your life, your distinct life, is bound up with Him. He has special love, special aims, a special idea for you. The distinct individuality which you have with Him shall never perish. It begins here, it continues for ever in eternity. You shall always be yourself for ever.' Individuality was thus secured; but because it was secured by union with God, the absolute Love, it could never become selfish, and it was bound to deepen in unselfishness. The attainment, then, of a perfect individuality in a perfect love—that is part of the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus. And to attain that is worth any struggle, any trouble. It ennobles all the war. It makes every battle in it worth waging. It glorifies every hour of the race. It sanctifies and makes beautiful every trial. It makes life a march to victory.

We are so apt to fancy that God's purpose concerning us must surely be fulfilled if we succeed in doing some grand and beneficent work for the good of mankind. But surely God is far more pleased if we are steadily growing more grand and noble and beautiful ourselves—and the two things do not necessarily go together at the beginning. When I say 'at the beginning,' I mean on this side of death, for death marks off a very short space of our life. It is certainly true that every man shall reap the harvest of good or evil that he has sown; but the better the harvest is, the longer he may have to wait for it. And we can well afford to wait. Yes, if need be, to wait until we see things as they really are in the clearer light beyond the veil of death—for we have all eternity to enjoy the harvest. All good work is put into God's hands, and He will never let it fail in the long run, though it may appear to fail at first. And all bad work is playing into the hands of Satan, and will certainly bear its bitter fruit. 'God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.' To do wrong is to be sure of failure, while to do right is to place one's self in the army of the Divine Conqueror, and to be sure of lasting victory in the end. God's great 'Well Done!' will not necessarily be given to those who have successfully carried out great and world-wide schemes for good, but belongs to those, and those alone, who have been good and faithful servants. No matter what your position may be, nor how cramped your circumstances, you have as good a chance of winning that glorious commendation as any one in this boundless universe. No one can make you a failure—no one but yourself—for faithfulness is always success, and you can be faithful if you will. To you has this inspiring promise been spoken: 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.'<sup>1</sup>

Speak, History, who are life's victors? unroll thy long annals and say—

Are they those whom the world called the victors, who won the success of the day?

The martyrs, or Nero? the Spartans who fell at Thermopylæ's tryst,

Or the Persians and Xerxes? his judges, or Socrates? Pilate, or Christ?

(2) Then there is the other side of the matter. What does Christ Jesus bid us do concerning

<sup>1</sup> D. Farncomb, *The Vision of His Face*, 189.

man? What is our relation to the human race? His life tells us what that is. It is a relation of absolute sacrifice of self. He commands—and He lived out this command—that we should, hour by hour, devote our life, everything that we are and have, to the love of the human race; to promote its spiritual, imaginative, intellectual, and moral growth; to surrender our very being, save that which we have in God, for the collective whole. And we are only not to surrender that being which we have in God, because it is by that—by our union, that is, with perfect love—that we are enabled to offer up our life for the cause of our brother men.

Years ago when I had a class among the flower girls at Charing Cross, I succeeded in persuading one of them to promise to lead a new and better life, but she wished to postpone her amendment; she promised to give it all up six weeks later, but not just then. In vain I tried to persuade her, thinking it was but a subterfuge and an excuse to avoid making an immediate decision; but the girl stood as firm as a rock—she would do what I wished in six weeks' time. Seeing I could prevail nothing, I desisted, very discouraged, and feeling almost sure that her excuse was only offered in order to be quit of my importunity. Imagine my feelings when at the promised time the girl came, neatly dressed and ready to carry out her promise. And then it leaked out, bit by bit, that at the time when I spoke to her, the friend with whom she lived was on the verge of being confined. It fell to her lot to support her friend in the hour of her weakness, and repugnant as her life had become to her, she actually carried it on for six weeks, till her friend was up and about again, sacrificing herself and imperilling her chance of a new life, out of loyalty to her friend. You can imagine, but I cannot adequately describe, how humbled I felt when this story came out. I had been judging her as one who was giving excuses, but in very truth she had been making a sacrifice of self, which might well bring into my cheek the blush of inferiority and shame. Verily she loved much; to her the Master could say, 'Go in peace.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Quintin Hogg*, 52.

## What were the Churches of Galatia?

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### INTRODUCTION: PRINCIPLES AND METHOD.

THE general character and bearing of this problem are familiar to every reader of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, and need not be here described. It will be useful to state only new evidence, and new

aspects of the previously known evidence. I may, however, reiterate my former statements, which are fundamental principles: (1) The matter is one of geography; (2) Luke's narrative is minutely accurate. Both need some further elaboration.

(1) There would be no difficulty and no problem,