

# 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 Expository Times* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_expository-times\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php)

pdfs are named: [Volume]\_[Issue]\_[1<sup>st</sup> page of article].pdf

The notice of Tennyson, written on the issue of the Memoir, is very appreciative. One is glad to read it in these days of indifference. But the heartiest writing in the book is that on George Borrow. Mr. Watts-Dunton knew Borrow intimately in the end of his long life—before he went home to Norwich to die, which took seven years—and he loved him greatly. That he was not loved by everybody who knew him is made clear enough in the short sketch of Dr. Gordon Hake. But then Hake and Borrow were so different. 'Borrow was shy, eccentric, angular, rustic in accent and in locution, but with a charm for me, at least, that was irresistible. Hake was polished, easy, and urbane in everything, and, although not without prejudice and bias, ready to shine gracefully in any society. As far as Hake was concerned, the sole

link between them was that of reminiscence of earlier days and adventures in Borrow's beloved East Anglia.'

In the Introduction, which is not written by Watts-Dunton, there is a true Borrowian anecdote. "No living man knew Borrow as well as Thomas Hake," Watts-Dunton once remarked to a friend. To the young Hakes, Lavengro was a great joy, and they would often accompany him part of his way home from Coombe End. On one occasion Borrow said to the youngest boy, "Do you know how to fight a man bigger than yourself?" The lad confessed that he did not. "Well," said Borrow, "you challenge him to fight, and when he is taking off his coat, you hit him in the stomach as hard as you can and run for your life."

## Studies in Pauline Vocabulary.

### Of Hyperbole.

BY THE REV. R. MARTIN POPE, M.A., KESWICK.

A DISTINCTIVE mark of St. Paul's style is his use of verbs and adverbs compounded of *ὑπέρ*. In the majority of cases the prefix *ὑπέρ*- is an intensive form of the original local significance of the preposition = 'over,' 'beyond': hence such a form as *ὑπερευτυγχάνω*, where the preposition means 'for the sake of,' is left out of our discussion. We may begin with the verb *ὑπερβάλλω*, from which the word 'hyperbole' is derived. The Greek substantive, it may be noted, occurs chiefly in the adverbial *καθ' ὑπερβολήν* = *par excellence*, which is found five times in the Epistles and in 2 Co 4<sup>7</sup>, where we have the phrase *καθ' ὑπερβολήν εἰς ὑπερβολήν*—a highly superlative expression translated by Moffatt, 'past all comparison'; but there are two interesting passages, 2 Co 4<sup>7</sup> 12<sup>7</sup>, where *ὑπερβολή* is found as a qualitative noun denoting excellence. Nothing can be inferred from the use of *ὑπερβάλλω*, which, if a favourite with St. Paul, is yet the natural word to express the idea of pre-eminence or surpassingness, and is found as a participial epithet with *μέγιστος* (Eph 1<sup>19</sup>), *πλούτος* (*ib.* 2<sup>7</sup>), *ἀγάπη* (*ib.* 3<sup>19</sup>), where it further qualifies the succeeding *γνώσεως*, and finally in 2 Co 9<sup>14</sup> with

*χάρις*.<sup>1</sup> In 2 Co 11<sup>23</sup>, St. Paul uses the adverb *ὑπερβαλλόντως* as a variation on *περισσοτέρως* and *πόλλακις* in describing 'in mad fashion' (*παράφρονῶν*), as it seems to himself, his labours, lashes, and imprisonments; and in the comparison of his record with that of would-be apostles, which has been, so to speak, forced on him, he piles up hyperbole beginning with the phrase *ὑπὲρ ἐγώ*, where *ὑπέρ* is a prepositional adverb. The adverbial hyperbole appears to be a genuinely Pauline coinage in *ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ* in 1 Th 5<sup>13</sup> (v.l. *ὑπερεκπερισσῶς*), 'exceeding highly,' R.V.; 'very highly,' A.V.; and in Eph 3<sup>20</sup>, A.V. and R.V., 'exceeding abundantly.' The Ephesian Epistle, which is rich in hyperbole, gives us also *ὑπεράνω* (1<sup>21</sup> 4<sup>10</sup>; found also in He 9<sup>9</sup>), translated 'far above' in A.V.: it is, however, possible that this is but a mark of Hellenistic style like *ὑποκάτω* and is not really intensive; but *ὑπερλίαν* in 2 Co 11<sup>5</sup> as an adverbial epithet of the apostles, 'very chiefest,'

<sup>1</sup> There is an interesting use of *ὑπερβάλλω* in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (Grenfell and Hunt), 513. 25, where it is found in the passive, of a house for which a higher bid has been made (*ὑπερβεβλήσθαι*).

R.V. (repeated *ib.* 12<sup>11</sup>), is undoubtedly hyperbolic like *ὑπεράγαν*, which is found in 1 Clem. lvi. 2 with *ᾧφέλιμος*.

So much for the adverbs: we turn now to the verbs and note the compounds—*ὑπεραίρω* (2 Co 12<sup>7</sup>, 2 Th 2<sup>4</sup>), *ὑπεραυξάνω* (2 Th 1<sup>3</sup>), *ὑπερεκτείνω* (2 Co 10<sup>14</sup>), *ὑπερνικάω* (Ro 8<sup>37</sup>), *ὑπερπλεονάζω* (1 Ti 1<sup>14</sup>) and *ὑπερυψόω* (Ph 2<sup>4</sup>). It would be going too far to assert that this type of phraseology is peculiarly Pauline; for the Apostolic fathers give us *ὑπεραγαλλομαι*, *ὑπερδοξάζω*, *ὑπερεπαινώ*, *ὑπεραγαπάω*, *ὑπερευχαριστέω*, and *ὑπερσπουδάζω*. It is possible, of course, that the sub-apostolic writers unconsciously or even deliberately copied a mark of style which was familiar to them from its prominence in the Pauline letters. But it is a more probable explanation that such exaggerated forms of expression are due to the more free and popular Greek in which Early Christian literature was written. We cannot regard even *ὑπερνικάω* as a Pauline coinage with any certainty, though *ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ* may with some confidence be described as a hyperbole thrown off by St. Paul in a moment of ethical or spiritual emotion and therefore a speciality of his own. It is a somewhat subtle question how far popular style and the emotional mood or mentality of the individual writer affected the choice or creation of such hyperbolic expressions as have been cited above.

The dullness of this somewhat linguistic exordium will, I hope, be relieved if we now look at a few of the more familiar examples of those *ὑπερ*-verbs in St. Paul and attempt a brief exposition of them.

1. *ὑπερνικῶμεν διὰ τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντος ἡμᾶς* (Ro 8<sup>37</sup>). Rendel Harris has translated the Greek in a manner which vividly represents the original to the English reader by 'we *over-overcome*.' Moffatt retains the beautiful 'we are more than conquerors' of the Geneva Version, found also in the A.V. and R.V. Tertullian and Cyprian (quoted by Sanday-Headlam, *in loc.*) translate the Greek by *supervincimus*—a coinage which certainly does more justice to St. Paul than the colourless *superamus* of the Vulgate. Tyndale's 'overcome strongly' is not as good as Coverdale's 'we conquer far.' The Christian life is a continuous victory—that is the first idea given by the word used in the present tense. The second idea is that it is not one of those victories which cost as much to the conqueror as to the conquered. There *is* a cost for victory to

the Christian, whether the fight be against sin or sorrow or life's disabilities. Victory leaves its mark on the body: it sometimes produces the reaction of mental depression: it puts us out of harmony with our surroundings: it modifies—sometimes breaks the relationships of a lifetime, and its immediate result may be a sense of loneliness almost too bitter to be borne. Yet these are but the accidents of the experience of spiritual conquest. Within the soul itself there is a reinforcement of faith, hope, and love; the will has received an added force: to quote Rendel Harris (*Memoranda Sacra*, p. 184), we 'rise the stronger for the strife even while we strive.' Moffatt quotes, *in loc.* (*Literary Illustrations of the Bible*), the saying of Nelson on the battle of the Nile, 'Victory is not a name strong enough for such a scene.' St. Paul likewise in effect says, 'Victory is not the name for the Christian's achievement': it is victory and something more: it is 'grace for grace': it is not merely a successful issue to which we 'muddle through' with much faltering and many errors; not a breathless impetus that just grips the point to be aimed at, like some rock-climber almost spent: it is an impetus that carries us beyond the issue, nerved and exhilarated, to meet the test that comes next. It is the love which Tennyson speaks of:

' that rose on stronger wings,  
Unpalsied when he met with Death.

2. *ὑπερπλεόνασεν ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν* (1 Ti 1<sup>14</sup>). Here the simple verb would do to express the abounding fullness of the stream of divine grace. 'The river of God is full of water,' says the Psalmist. To St. Paul the grace of Christ is a river 'in spate,' or an overflowing flood. Some such metaphor is necessary in rendering the word to which the A.V. 'was exceedingly abundant,' and the R.V., 'abounded exceedingly,' hardly do justice: hence the excellence of Moffatt's version, 'The grace of our Lord *flooded my life* along with the faith and love that Christ Jesus inspires.'

3. *διὸ καὶ ὁ Θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν* (Ph 2<sup>9</sup>). 'God hath highly exalted him' (A.V. and R.V.): 'God raised him high' (Moffatt). I venture to think that each of these renderings might convey the impression that a colourless word like the uncompounded *ὑψόω* was in the text. The statement is a climax of no ordinary force and splendour coming as it does after the sublime passage—one of the greatest in all Christian literature and the source of theologies and homilies innumerable—in which St. Paul

expounded the Incarnation, in its progress from an externally pre-existent life to a humiliation in time and a voluntary obedience to the extent of death upon a cross. The words compress in wonderful fashion the essence of the Christian creed and also its ethic. A translation of the expression *ὑπερύψωσεν* adequate to its emotional intensity and majestic dignity is not easy; but I may quote the paraphrase which I had the good fortune recently to hear from the lips of Dr. Jas. H. Moulton, 'Wherefore God made him the SUPERMAN.' The Nietzschean ideal of colossal soulless efficiency, the aristocracy of scientific Intellectuals dead to love, pity, and self-sacrifice, vanishes like a hideous nightmare before the radiant Redeemer, whom a great artist of the Spirit has depicted with immortal beauty and sureness of touch. The soul of man yearns for One 'mighty to save,' because pre-eminent in Love, Regnant because crucified, Lord of humanity because obedient to death.

My starry wings  
I do forsake,  
Love's highway of humility to take:  
Meekly I fit my stature to your need.  
In beggar's part  
About your gates I shall not cease to plead—  
As man, to speak with man—  
Till by such art  
I shall achieve My Immemorial Plan,  
Pass the low lintel of the human heart.<sup>1</sup>

4. *ὑπερανέει ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν* (2 Th 1<sup>3</sup>). 'Your faith groweth exceedingly' (A.V. and R.V.); 'Your faith grows apace' (Moffatt). This great encourager

<sup>1</sup> E. Underhill.

of the saints does not use the simple *αὐξάνει*, but characteristically intensifies the idea. He even goes beyond the *πλεονάζει* which immediately succeeds and is connected with love (cf. another favourite word, *περισσεύειν*, also united with the idea of Christian love in 1 Th 4<sup>10</sup>). It is the *faith* of his converts which he singles out for his special praise in this passage. It not only grows, but grows in exceptional measure or ratio. By the apostle, indeed, Love and Faith can never be regarded as other than superabundant; he thinks of both in terms of superfluity, and like high Heaven,

rejects the lore  
Of nicely calculated less or more.

The Church has always had both; but has the Church ever yet risen to the height of the Pauline standard? Are we being lifted to it by the present crisis of the nations in despite of ourselves? Love certainly is quickening its pace and straining every effort in its awakened passion for service: it is obeying the call of duty and bearing sorrow and death in quietness. Is Faith equally alive? Is it arising and putting on its beautiful garments, aroused from torpor and faint-heartedness 'to mew its mighty youth'? There are signs that Faith will follow where Love is leading. Thousands already are learning in the anxieties and perplexities of a disordered world to lean on a Higher Power and to pray with Tennyson:

O Living will that shalt endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock,  
Rise in the spiritual rock,  
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure.

## Contributions and Comments.

### The Divine Expositor.

'He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.'—Lk 24<sup>27</sup>.

No volume in His Hand, the Sacred Writings  
Were fixed securely in His Memory's hold;  
He could lose none, the Spirit's least inditings  
He quotes, and tells the secret they enfold.  
From Genesis to Malachi, He shows  
Predictions of His birth, His life, His woes.

Sacred Expositor! Thou Heavenly Teacher!  
O company with us, along life's road;

Point out the charms in Inspiration's feature—  
Reflexions of Thy glory, Son of God!  
Again, O Master, open up the Word,  
And, in each chapter, may we find our Lord.

Our 'eyes are holden,' as *they* did not know Thee:  
Open our eyes; show Divine Truth to us!  
Clear to our vision types and shadows, so we  
Perceive the hidden meaning glorious!  
New travellers to Emmaus, Master teach!  
Put Scripture 'mysteries' within our reach.

WILLIAM OLNEY.