

# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT

NOTES ON THE PSALMS

VOLUME 34

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**PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**A study in spiritual character and achievement**

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VOLUME 34

JANUARY, 1966

## EDITORIAL

Because of rising costs *Bible Studies* has now been reduced in size from 16 pages to 12, entailing reductions in the length of articles. Students therefore should write concisely in order to make the best use of the space available. We would ask brethren to help editors by carefully writing, or preferably typing, articles on standard quarto or foolscap paper, leaving a margin on the left hand side.

We welcome new contributors to this issue; also those who are resuming after a break, and we would encourage all who have commenced studying and writing on the new subject to continue throughout the year. It is easy to start well but to tire before the end. In such matters we should follow the example of the great apostle and "finish the course". During the year, as our appreciation of Paul's character and work grows, let us try to act upon his oft-repeated advice to imitate him even as he also imitated Christ. We trust that there will be a fruitful year of Bible study for all during 1966.

L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT SAUL OF TARSUS—PHARISEE AND PERSECUTOR

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —From a few scriptures we learn of the life of Saul prior to his conversion. He was young (Acts 7. 58), of Jewish parents, and duly circumcised (Philippians 3. 5), of Roman citizenship (Acts 22. 28), of Tarsus (Acts 21. 39, 22. 3) with its Greek influence, but brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22. 3), a Hebrew and a Pharisee, very zealous and, most important, in the righteousness which is in the law found blameless by men (Philippians 3. 5, 6).

The Lord's words to Ananias revealed that, "He is a chosen vessel unto Me" (Acts 9. 15). These words show that, having chosen him, God had planned a course which he would follow in training and in service. This choice is particularly relevant to our study in the months to come, in order that we learn the methods employed to fit the man for the service to which he was called and which he nobly performed. His early Jewish training led him to seek the righteousness of the law. Saul was a strict Pharisee, and he shared the Pharisees' view of Jesus and His teaching.

As Saul heard the testimony of Stephen, his historical review and his accusation of the teachers of the law, Saul's whole upbringing and training caused intense feelings to well up within him. Stephen could not possibly be right! "And they stoned Stephen... And Saul was consenting unto his death.... But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord... " So ended his career as a Pharisee and a persecutor.

Why then did God choose this man? His roots were in the Jewish faith; the knowledge acquired by him in his early life in the city of Tarsus prepared him in part for his work. It was the purpose of God that the way to righteousness by faith in Christ should be open worldwide. He saw in Saul a man who, once converted, would have the knowledge, zeal, ability and drive that would lead to the proclaiming throughout the civilized world of the doctrine of righteousness by faith in Christ. Romans 10. 1-15 shows how clearly he taught that message.

*J. J. P.*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —It is certain that Paul's strictly orthodox background began in his own home with his Pharisee father. After his salvation, attempts on his life when he was at Jerusalem seeing Peter (and also James) necessitated his being sent to Tarsus. This may indicate that he had family connections there. Saul was schooled in Jerusalem, for this was the centre of Jewry in all its forms. He would learn Hebrew, the Law of Moses, and the prophets, and in this city he would meet the leaders and thinkers of his race. He had a Jewish education. He was an eager pupil and his exceptional mental ability matched his enthusiasm. Not only was he a student of things Jewish, but he sought the authority and power to apply his knowledge. He sat at Gamaliel's feet but he did not share Gamaliel's passive temperament (Acts 5. 34-39). He led the attack on the Christians. His genealogy was known; his knowledge of the law was voluminous; his life was impeccable and none dared reproach him [1]. He was of the strictest sect of the Jews, a Pharisee. He saw nothing incongruous in wanting to persecute men to the death, since he believed that by suppressing what he thought to be heresy, the law would triumph and be established. He gave his vote and stood publicly in support of Stephen's death. He said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth". He even tortured men to make them blaspheme so that they could be accused of blasphemy, and was "exceedingly mad against them".

*A. B. R.*

**From Atherton.** —Possibly Saul was called after Israel's first king; both were of Benjamin. He was later called Paul, which means little. Jacob and Moses spoke of Benjamin. Jacob said, "Benjamin is a wolf that ravineth: in the morning he shall devour the prey" (Genesis 49. 27). This was like Saul before his conversion. Moses, in happy contrast says, "The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; He covereth him all the day long" (Deuteronomy 33. 12). This aptly describes Saul's later life.

The Spirit of God remains silent as to whether Saul had any link with the Lord Jesus in any way in his unconverted days. This is remarkable since Saul, though younger than the Lord, was contemporary with Him. Dr. Young gives Saul's life as born A. D. 3, died A. D. 70. Thus he would be around 26 years of age when the Lord died, and being a zealous Jew, where was he at the feast of the Passover [2]? We cannot say, although it appears that he was not on the scene, for some reason unknown to us. The Lord later reveals Himself to Saul as unto one born out of due time (1 Corinthians 15. 8).

We marvel at the exceeding grace of God upon him. The Lord forgave him. He counted himself the chief of sinners; the mercy, grace, and long suffering of God were towards him in abundance; and this made him ever grateful to the Lord whom he met on his mad career.

*G. A. Jones*

## EXTRACTS

**From Methil.** —Tarsus was to be a city long remembered because of Saul. He was brought up a Pharisee, his father being one before him. He received from Gamaliel, one of the outstanding teachers of the day, a thorough grounding in the Pharisees' views and the Jews' religion (Acts 22. 3); he also learned the trade of a tent maker. This, historians tell us, was something that was ever expected of those of high birth, that they should learn a trade. He knew Greek, and was also a Roman citizen (Acts 16. 37, 23. 27). This citizenship may have come through his ancestors. Naturally speaking, Saul came from good Jewish stock: "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews" (Philippians 3. 5).

Saul was only a young man (Acts 7. 58) at the stoning of Stephen. He was a zealous persecutor of the early saints (Galations 1. 13). He entered into every house, committing men and women to prison. Saul himself later tells how that he persecuted even unto death (Acts 22. 4). Throughout it all, however, he was fully convinced that he was doing the right thing (See Acts 26. 9), and this conviction remained with him till the day of his conversion. Saul's zeal was indeed great, but it was not a zeal according to knowledge (see Romans 10. 2).

*A. R. Smith*

**From Crowborough.** —Paul would not have mentioned the fact of his being a Pharisee as something to glory in (in the flesh) if the first principles had not been right. This is in contrast to the Sadducees, whose basic principles were wrong, for they denied the resurrection [3]. Saul of Tarsus was not only himself a Pharisee, but the son of a Pharisee, and therefore believed in the resurrection (Acts 23. 1-10). In the traditions of his fathers he outstripped many of his own age in the Jewish religion.

The Lord Jesus warned the disciples that the time would come when some, thinking to do God service, would kill them. So it was with Saul. In all good conscience he made havoc of the church of God. Gifted public speaker as he afterwards proved himself to be, he did not try to reason with those of the Way but sought to stamp them out with violence.

Was the death of Stephen a turning point in the life of Saul [4]? He makes mention of it later with great regret. Saul could have no answer to the grand Spirit-filled speech of Stephen on this occasion.

*J. Robertson*

**From Carlisle.** —Paul remembered his early life before conversion with sorrow, yet it heightened his appreciation of his deliverance and his "apprehension" (Philippians 3. 12). These memories, as well as other things, were used by God to keep Paul humble so that he rejoiced in divine grace and mercy. "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15. 10).

We were led to consider the sovereign wisdom of God in the choosing and preparation of vessels for His service. It seems profitless to discuss how far God prepares an individual like Saul of Tarsus by natural heritage, gifts and early circumstances, and to what extent He takes up and transforms with such consummate skill and effectiveness, a life which had been hitherto completely contrary to Himself. Sufficient to say, perhaps, that divine omniscience and love saw, as always, the end from the beginning, and over-ruled that each thread was woven perfectly.

Saul's early life as a Pharisee and persecutor took us to the subject of conscience. Before the Council the Apostle claimed, "I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day" (Acts 23. 1; see also 2 Timothy 1. 3). In his subsequent life and ministry Paul has much to say on the subject of conscience, ever aware it would seem, that if his early anti-Christian life could involve a good conscience, then throughout his life there must be constant vigilance towards a duly instructed and sensitive conscience [5]. We contrast the "good conscience" of Acts 23. 1 and that of 1 Timothy 1. 5. Flanked by "love out of a pure heart" and "faith unfeigned" a good conscience is good indeed.

*J. D. Terrell, J. Hunter*

**From Kingston upon Thames.** —It is clear that Saul was born in Tarsus (Acts 21. 39 and 22. 3). Paul's speech recorded in Acts 22 was made in Jerusalem, so verse 3 implies that he was brought up in that city, at the feet of Gamaliel, a doctor of the law. In the light of Saul's education it seems that his family must have been one of some means. Saul was given official authority in the persecution of the Christians, and may have been a member of the Sanhedrin, for he cast his vote against them (Acts 26. 10). When Saul was a persecutor he was just as sincere as he was later, after he was saved. During his whole life he was of a good conscience. In Genesis 49. 27 Jacob speaks of his son Benjamin as a grievous wolf. So was Saul, a descendant of Benjamin, a wolf hunting and killing the followers of the Lord Jesus.

*P. Bartlett*

**From Brantford, Ont.** —Saul's genealogy was pure, a "Hebrew of Hebrews", indicating his ability to trace his line back to Abraham. His father was a Pharisee, as was his teacher Gamaliel. In spite of his strict upbringing he would no doubt have come in close contact with Gentiles and their ways in the Graeco-Roman Tarsus, a university town and a great commercial centre, "no mean city". He also enjoyed the privileged position of a Roman citizen. The days of Saul the persecutor reminded us of Jacob's prophecy regarding the tribe of Benjamin, "in the morning he shall devour his prey". The thoroughness of his persecution in making havoc of the church of God, and in exceeding madness desiring the extermination of Christians, seems characteristic of all he did. Previously he had been an outstanding student, later an outstanding apostle.

*E. N.*

**From Birkenhead.** —When the Lord Jesus came to earth there were in existence five different sects in the Jewish religion. It is understood they came into being at or before 160 B. C. in the time of the Maccabees. The Pharisees were the strongest and possibly the largest, and the strictest sect, as Paul informs Agrippa in Acts 26. 5, being very religious with very much outward show. Full details of their manner of life are recorded in Matthew 23. One thing is very prominent: while they professed to know and keep the Law, they added to it the traditions of the fathers, and very often gave the greater place to the traditions than to the word of God (see Matthew 15. 1-12).

Saul's zeal at first led him into wrong paths, for he persecuted the Christians and made havoc of the church, but God used this to His glory, for when the saints were scattered they took the principles of the Faith with them; the result was that many churches were planted in places where they would not otherwise have been. The Lord asked him on the Damascus road, "Why persecutest thou Me?" Whoever harms the people of God harms also the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**From Vancouver, B. C.**—Paul was brought up as a strict Jew, gaining his Jewish teaching "at the feet of Gamaliel" in Jerusalem (Acts 22. 3). He also no doubt had a liberal education at Tarsus. He was truly a well-educated man. He later learned in reaching men to be "all things to all men". Comparison can be made with Moses in the palace of Pharaoh, and contrast with John and Peter, humble fisherman. Complete isolation from general knowledge is a great drawback whether in Moses', Paul's or our day.

Pharisees were described by the Lord as hypocrites. Saul said he lived with a good conscience. Yet he acted "in ignorance".

The Hebrew word Saul means "asked for". We do not know the purpose of the request for Saul by his parents. Undoubtedly it was widely diverse from his ultimate purpose in life. Let us seek the Lord for His guidance as to events in our life.

*J. Pope, J. Bell, Jr.*

**From Derby.**—For all Saul's apparent hardness and bigotry, his early instruction was part of God's preparation of Paul the apostle, the "chosen vessel to bear My Name before the Gentiles". Before his election was manifested in a call, God prepared Saul to fulfil his allotted tasks. His birth was in Tarsus. He was a Roman, though he was a Jew, and this helped him at Philippi. His thorough knowledge of the Law helped no doubt, in his exposition of the great doctrine of justification by faith, and thus for the fulfilment of his work in the gospel to the Gentiles. His natural ability and enthusiasm were all turned from persecution and party strife, and were dedicated to the service of the risen Christ.

*P. L. H.*

**From Southport**—It is to be gathered from Galatians 1. 14 that in his studies Saul outstripped most of his contemporaries and he is still described as a young man when he took charge of the outer garments of those who stoned Stephen. His ability and zeal doubtless led to the willingness of the high priests to utilize him further afield by entrusting him with written authority to the synagogues of Damascus (which was the capital of Syria and about 130 miles north-east of Jerusalem) where he might give vent to his breathings and threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. In his own words his persecution of Christians was "beyond measure". At some time in his youth he was also taught the trade of a tent maker, it being a Jewish maxim, "he that teacheth not his son a trade doeth the same as if he taught him to be a thief. He made use of this trade from time to time in later life, to support himself that he might be burdensome to none (Acts 20. 34; 1 Thessalonians 2. 9; 2 Thessalonians 3. 8).

*L. Jones*

**From Wigan**—A Pharisee, son of a Pharisee: something to be sought after in any Jewish society. This was a status which Paul the apostle could rightly claim (Acts 23. 6).

After the flesh he had many great qualities. He was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, by birth. His parents adhered to the Law of Moses in the letter of the Law if not in the spirit; he was circumcised the eighth day. According to the judgment of men he was blameless. But the Lord gives the true measure of men, "The flesh profiteth nothing". Saul learned later that the relationship that mattered for eternity was that described in John 1. 13. Children of God are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will

of men, but of God. His zeal, which was not according to knowledge (Romans 10. 2), **made** him a persecutor of the Lord's disciples; his zeal and religious bigotry could never be in question (Acts 7. 58—8. 3). After the stoning of Stephen, he laid waste the church (Acts 8. 3), persecuted the Way (Acts 22. 4), persecuted the church of God (1 Corinthians 15. 9), and made havoc of it (Galatians 1. 13). He did it in ignorance and unbelief. "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26. 9).

*J. H.*

**From Hamilton.** —Saul of Tarsus as a Pharisee was zealous, ambitious, diligent and, in the external requirements of the Law, blameless. These characteristics advanced him beyond many of his contemporaries, and justified him in later years in reminding his accusers, who were acquainted with his manner of life from his youth, that after the strictest sect of their religion he lived a Pharisee. Saul, in his unsaved days was proud of his pure lineage, upbringing, education and blameless life.

It was this dedicated and deeply religious man who emerged as a deadly and bitter opponent of the early church. We learn that Saul, who was involved in the martyrdom of others beside Stephen, always gave his vote against the disciples. So successful was this persecution in Jerusalem at the beginning that only the twelve apostles remained, and those of the church who had eluded his grasp were scattered abroad. But not even in foreign cities were they safe from his fury, for Saul went to the high priest and requested letters to extend the persecution to Damascus and return with bound prisoners to Jerusalem for sentence. In later years Saul, now called Paul, on reviewing his activities during this period as blasphemer and persecutor, said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

*G. Farquhar*

**From Glasgow (Govan and Parfick).** —Paul described himself as a Jew, a Hebrew, an Israelite, and a descendant of Abraham. Before his conversion he had believed it to be his duty according to the law to persecute any who confessed the Name of the Lord Jesus. None could doubt his sincerity. He speaks of serving God from his forefathers in a pure conscience (2 Timothy 1. 3). What he learned as a student of the law was surely not all abandoned when the light burst upon him. Nevertheless, much of it would assume an entirely new significance. It is worth considering in what sense he was found blameless according to the righteousness which is in the law [6]. It is by the grace of God that he was enabled to see that the law in itself was not leading him to persecute the church, but his own interpretation of it. He later confesses himself the chief of sinners.

It is remarkable that Paul could lay claim to Roman citizenship. Tarsus was granted freedom and immunity by Antony; this meant exemption from public services, burdens and charges. The wealth built up by the linen industry, and the fact that Tarsus was so near to the Cilician Gates gave importance to the city. The privileges which were granted to the citizens of Tarsus attracted men of learning. Roman citizenship may have been a privilege associated with Paul's family, for he was a Roman born (though a Hebrew of Hebrews). Cicero said, "It is an outrage to bind a Roman citizen, a crime to beat him".

*Eric Archibald*

**From Edinburgh.** —Saul of Tarsus was a man who could rightly boast among his fellows of the position which he had attained. There is evidence in the scriptures before us that a strong feature of his character was his zeal. He was of the strict sect of the Pharisees, whose code was based on the law [7]. What a marked contrast to Stephen, who was a follower of the Lord Jesus, for his dying words were, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". The Lord Jesus reveals the character of the Pharisees in Matthew 23. As a persecutor Saul left deep marks. His support was given to those who in their fury took Stephen's life. The strong word "havoc" is used to denote the persecution of the church.

*D. B. Renfrew*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —Saul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia in Asia Minor, a prominent city noted for its philosophy and literature, in which it ranked with Athens and Alexandria. The atmosphere of his youth was thus one of culture and learning.

As a young man Saul was sent to Jerusalem to study the law under the great Gamaliel, a Pharisee. Saul became an ardent disciple of this illustrious doctor of the Law and advanced beyond many of his own age group. He became a devout law-keeper and tried to serve God wholeheartedly; he was a Hebrew of Hebrews; zealous for the traditions of his fathers. In character, Saul was outstanding for his determination and relentlessness; whatever he took up he pursued with vigour and threw his whole being into the action. Honesty and singleness of purpose and attention to detail must be added to his enthusiasm.

Significantly, the first mention of Saul in Scripture is in relation to the persecution of the church. Those who stoned Stephen laid their clothes at the feet of Saul, who was apparently in charge of the operation. Following this, Saul's onslaught on the Christians was as intense as his nature. Little did he realize that later he would support the same faith with the same zeal, which was indelibly part of his make-up.

*C. L. Prasher*

**From Leicester.** —In Acts 22. 3 we read that Saul was born in Tarsus of Cilicia. This may have entitled him to Roman citizenship since he justly claimed to be born a Roman (Acts 22, 28) as well as being a Jew by race (Acts 21. 39). We do not know the date of his birth, but judging from other evidence of his early life it would possibly be around 3 or 4 A. D. His parents were evidently fairly well-to-do, as they were able to send him to Jerusalem to study the law under the famous teacher of that day, Gamaliel. Here, he tells us, he outstripped the young students of his own age because of his great keenness for the Law of his fathers. He was of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3. 5) and as touching the Law a Pharisee, as his father had been (Acts 23. 6). Of Benjamin, Jacob prophesied, "Benjamin is a wolf that ravineth" (Genesis 49. 21).

His keenness, untouched by the grace of God, led to ruthless pursuit and persecution of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Wishing to exterminate these hated disciples of Christ, he obtained authority from the high priest, a Sadducee, in order to be certain of success in arresting any Jews he found in Damascus who had confessed to be of the Way. But the risen Lord had been watching Saul and marking his zeal, though misplaced because of his ignorance of God's requirements, and had chosen him as a vessel to bear His Name before the Gentiles. And so at the right moment He intervened and stopped Saul in his tracks as he was rushing impetuously to Damascus.

*I. McLean, G. Hyden*

**From Paisley.** —The persecution against the Way which followed the death of Stephen stands out in its devastating and systematic success through the man who commanded it. Saul was an intellectual who stood head and shoulders above his fellows, as Saul of Gibeah had physically overshadowed the men of Israel (1 Samuel 10. 23). In zeal to destroy the disciples he seemed to become like a dragon (Acts 9. 1). His namesake before him likewise had slain the Gibeonites with misplaced zeal (2 Samuel 21. 1 and 2). The man who stood by the garments of Stephen's murderers was given authority, as the man who hid among the stuff was made to lead the battle for Israel. But if Saul of Gibeah erred through presumption, Saul of Tarsus erred through ignorance, and obtained mercy (1 Timothy 1. 13). He did not understand that he was only fulfilling the word spoken by a Prophet greater than Moses, "yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God" (John 16. 2).

*T. H. S.*

### COMMENTS

[1] (**Whitehills and Macduff**). —Paul as a Jew would never claim to be impeccable, which means, "not liable to sin"; he claimed to be "found blameless" (Philippians 3. 6), but that was by men, not by God. See what he says of his early life in Romans 7. 7-12.

*J. M.*

[2] (**Atherton**). —It is a matter of great difficulty to say when Paul was born or when exactly he died, though his death is generally thought to be in the reign of Nero. To accept that he was born in A. D. 3 would make him six or seven years younger than the Lord. Then to ask the question about the Passover, which, I presume, means the Passover on which the Lord died, is a question no one can answer, as to where Paul was. We have plenty of facts and truth in the Scriptures without seeking to peer into the unknown and unknowable.

*JM.*

[3] (**Crowborough**). —What Paul is recording in Philippians 3, of what was true of him in the flesh before his conversion, is not in justification of the Pharisees and condemnation of the Sadducees. The Lord had condemned the former in words of the most severe kind. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! . . . Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgement of hell (Gehenna)?" (Matthew 23. 29-33).

*JM.*

[4] (**Crowborough**). —There is no doubt that the scene at the stoning of Stephen affected Paul, for he refers to it when he was speaking to the Lord, in Acts 22. 20. The turning point in his life was on the road outside of Damascus (Acts 9. 1-9).

*JM.*

[5] (**Carlisle**). —Conscience is self-knowledge. It is the inward knowledge which may be instructed rightfully or wrongfully. Paul claimed that he lived with a good conscience until the day he stood before the high priest Ananias (Acts 23. 1, 2), whereupon the priest commanded them to smite him on the mouth, for Paul had acted one way and then turned and acted the opposite. He had acted with a good conscience in both ways. Conscience is not the standard of what is right and wrong.

*JM.*

[6] (**Glasgow, Govan and Partick**). —Paul was found blameless by man, not by God.

*J. M.*

[7] (**Edinburgh**). —That is the code of the Pharisees according to the Law which was in external things, in tithing herbs, but they left undone such matters of the law, as judgement, mercy and faith (Matthew 23. 23).

*J. M.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question from Crowborough**—What does a "Hebrew of Hebrews" mean?  
**Answer**—It means a Hebrew, of Hebrew parents. *J. M.*

(See also *Bible Studies*, June 1965, page 93 and, as to the New Testament usage of the word "Hebrew", Acts 6. 1. *L. B.* )

**Question from Edinburgh**—Did the persecution affect the Church the Body of Christ (see Acts 9. 4)?

**Answer**—No, that could not be affected by persecution. What it did affect was the church of God in Jerusalem, for the disciples were all scattered from Jerusalem, except the apostles (Acts 8. 1-3). All members of Christ are united in life to Christ; indeed, He is their life, and nothing will affect the beauty, the holiness and unblemished state of that Church and all its members when presented in the future by Christ to Himself (Ephesians 5. 25-27; Colossians 3. 4). In contrast to this Church, the church of God can be and was made havoc of (Galatians 1. 13).

*J. M.*

STUDY IMPRESSIONS OF THE TIMES OF NOAH

(continued)

(E) Calendar of the Flood Period

Noah's Six-Hundredth Year.

2nd Month	<b>10th Day</b>	Noah, <b>his family, the beasts, fowls and</b> creeping things entered the ark.
2nd Month	<b>17th Day</b>	Fountains of <b>great deep</b> broken <b>up</b> and <b>windows</b> of heaven opened.
3rd Month	<b>27th Day</b>	Rain <b>ceased</b> to fall. Waters of Flood prevailed <b>until</b> the 150th day (i. e. <b>16th day</b> of 7th month).
7th Month	<b>17th Day</b>	<b>Ark rested on</b> Mount Ararat.
10th Month	<b>1st Day</b>	Tops <b>of</b> mountains seen.
11th Month	<b>10th Day</b>	Raven <b>sent</b> forth and did not return. <b>Dove sent</b> forth <b>and</b> returned.
11th Month	<b>17th Day</b>	<b>Dove sent</b> forth <b>and</b> returned with olive leaf.
11th Month	<b>24th Day</b>	<b>Dove sent</b> forth <b>and</b> did not return.
<b>Noah's Six Hundred and First Year</b>		
1st Month	<b>1st Day</b>	Waters <b>dried up</b> from the earth.
2nd Month	<b>27th Day</b>	The earth dry. Occupants <b>of ark</b> went forth.

This calendar shows that the total period for which the occupants were in the ark was **one year** and **seventeen** days. Yet they were by **no means afloat** all that time. The **first seven days** the ark remained on the **site of its** construction. It was then **afloat** for exactly **five** months. The **remainder** of the **time it was at rest on** Mount Ararat.

That the **rains** continued for **forty days and forty nights** is noteworthy as the **first** occurrence of the number **forty** in association with

trial or judgement. It recurs significantly throughout Scripture, e. g., Joshua's spies spent forty days spying out Canaan (Numbers 13, 25). Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness (Numbers 14. 33). Moses was in mount Sinai with God for two periods of forty days and forty nights (Deuteronomy 9. 9-25).

Nineveh was warned of impending judgement in forty days (Jonah 3. 4).

The Lord's temptation in the wilderness lasted for forty days and nights (Matthew 4. 2).

That the ark should rest on Mount Ararat on the 17th day of the 7th month, corresponding to the 17th day of the first month of the later Jewish calendar (see Exodus 12. 2), points remarkably to the day on which the Lord Jesus rose again from the dead.

"The LORD sat as King at the Flood" (Psalm 29. 10). It is beyond our imagination to grapple with what is implied by "all the fountains of the great deep" being broken up, and the windows of heaven being opened. The words of Elihu in Job 37. 11-13 touch impressively on the almighty power of God to unleash the forces of nature "whether it be for correction,... or for mercy, that He cause it to come". His use of these forces in judgement at the time of the flood was unique. It resulted in "all the high mountains that were under the whole heaven" being covered, so that "all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, of all that was in the dry land, died". "Noah only was left, and they that were with him in the ark. "

A universal judgement of such severity has caused some to question the love of God, especially as to those who perished with the ungodly but were not of responsible age. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18. 25). The destiny of the human soul is vastly more important than a portion of this life. Corruption had so multiplied that each succeeding generation could only grow in further rebellion against God, and so incur eternal judgement. At least those who perished in the Flood waters before reaching an age of responsibility will be covered by the work of the Saviour at Calvary, **and** on that ground come into eternal salvation and blessing.

#### **(F) Noah's Family**

Noah's nine progenitors from Adam to Lamech are recorded as having each begotten a son within the first two hundred years of their lives. Of Noah we read that he was five hundred years old: and he begat Shem, Ham and Japheth. When spoken of together, these sons of Noah are always spoken of in that order. This should not be taken as the order of their birth. For the Revised Version refers to Ham as the "youngest son" in Genesis 9. 24, the A. V. having "younger son". There is a discrepancy between the R. V. and the A. V. translations of Genesis 10. 21. The R. V. has "elder brother of Japheth" where the A. V. has "brother of Japheth the elder". It is clear from Genesis 11. 10 that Shem was 100 years of age two years after the Flood, that is in the 603rd year of Noah's life. This implies that he was born in Noah's 503rd year. It is interesting to compare three different views about the order of the birth of Shem, Ham and Japheth:

- (i) Some lay emphasis on the point that the reading, "Japheth the elder" is supported by the A. V., Dr. Young, J. N. Darby and the R. V. marginal reading. We know that Shem was born when Noah was 503 (Genesis 11. 10); Therefore it may be assumed that Japheth was born when Noah was 500 (Genesis 5. 32); and Ham some time after Shem (confirmed by "youngest" son in R. V. of Genesis 9. 24).

(ii) Others take their direction from the order in which the genealogies are presented in Genesis 10, i. e. Japheth (verse 2), Ham (verse 6) and Shem (verse 21). They suggest that this fits in with the rendering "Japheth the elder", and place Japheth's birth at Noah's 500th year, Shem at Noah's 503rd year, and Ham's some time between.

(iii) Others have suggested that Shem, Ham and Japheth may have been triplets all born in Noah's 503rd year, and references to the older or younger being in the same sense as it was said of Rebekah's twins, "The elder shall serve the younger".

Suggestion (i) may commend itself as more likely than (ii) or (iii), but of deeper spiritual interest is the consistent grouping of the brothers' names as Shem, Ham and Japheth. Shem was put first, it is suggested, because God chose him from among the three sons of Noah, and from his seed came Abram, Israel, and eventually the Lord Jesus himself.

The failure of Ham, which led to his son Canaan being cursed (Genesis 9. 24-27), contrasts with the God-fearing attitude of Shem and Japheth, and the issues of the lives of all three men were affected for good or ill.

It is significant that God was able to take up one family for His purpose. That Noah could command the loyalty of his three sons and their wives through circumstances so exacting, and lead them to stand with him against the floods of ungodliness, illustrates the power of a father's influence.

### **(G) Perspective of the Post-Diluvian Period of Abraham**

Concentrating on the line of Shem, we may helpfully link the time of Noah with the time of Abraham by reference to the generations between (see Genesis 11. 10-27).

<i>Name</i>	<i>Calculation of Years after the Flood</i>	
Arpachshad	Born	2 years after the Flood
Shelah	„	35 years later
Eber	30	„
Peleg	34	„
Reu	30	„
Serug	32	„
Nahor	30	„
Terah	29	„
Abram	» 130	„
Total years after Flood		352

As Noah lived for 350 years after the Flood, he died only two years before the birth of Abraham. Students will be impressed from the detail of Genesis 11 that the length of life granted to men after the Flood was much shorter than in the ante-diluvian period.

### **(H) Assessment of Noah's Spiritual Character**

Noah stands out as the great pivotal figure in God's purposes during the first 2, 000 years of man's history. Abel and Enoch are commended for their faith and witness (Hebrews 11. 1-5; Matthew 23. 35; Jude 14). Only scant reference is made in Scripture to others of the godly line. Of Noah it is said that he was a "preacher of righteousness" (2 Peter 2. 5), and that through his obedience to God he "condemned

the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith" (Hebrews 11. 7). We reflect with admiration on the amazing courage and strength of purpose in the spiritual character of a man who so yielded himself to God in his generation as to stand alone against the world. The faithfulness of God's record is seen in Genesis 9. 21. If this by way of warning reminds us of the great care needed right on to the end of our spiritual experience, it also underlines the brilliance of Noah's spiritual achievement, in that a man of like passions with us could rise to such heights of valiant faith.

*G. P. Jr.*

### NOTES ON THE PSALMS

#### Psalm 35

*(continued)*

"**But** as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth:  
I afflicted my soul with fasting;  
And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.  
I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or my brother:  
I bowed down mourning, as one that bewaileth his mother"  
(verses 13, 14).

How great is the contrast between the behaviour of David's enemies towards him, and his attitude toward them! When they were sick he wore sackcloth, mourning apparel, and he afflicted his soul with fasting. But David could feel that when he prayed, instead of his prayer reaching up to God, it returned to his own bosom. His behaviour towards his enemies was as though they were his friend and brother, and his mourning was as one who mourneth for his mother. How true is this conduct seen in the Lord's dealing with those that hated Him! And what was true of Him was true of many of His followers. They were "Christian" in the true meaning of that word, men and women who were Christ-like in their behaviour. Brethren and sisters in the Fellowship should consider their behaviour to one another in the light of these words of David.

"But when I halted they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together:  
The abjects gathered themselves together against me, and I knew it not;  
They did tear me, and ceased not:  
Like the profane mockers in feasts,  
They gnashed upon me with their teeth" (verses 15, 16).

Here again we have the contrast drawn by David between what he did and how those that hated him acted towards him. When he halted they rejoiced. The abjects (worthless people, smiters or slanderers) gathered themselves together against him, and they tore him with their tongues, and ceased not, and he knew it not. Like hypocritical mockers at feasts, they gnashed upon him with their teeth. Pity the character of the victim that falls under the bitterness of such hypocritical slanderers.

*J. M.*

*(to be continued, D. V.)*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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## EDITORIAL

The fact that many contributors have expressed matters of difficulty encountered in their study of this month's subject is an indication that brethren are not resting content with a superficial review of the narrative but are thinking carefully about the details. A sound knowledge of the broad outline of Paul's life is indeed necessary for a proper understanding of his character and mission, but it is suggested that a special purpose of this year's study is the acquisition of a deeper knowledge of the operation of the Holy Spirit's influence in Paul's life as revealed in his addresses and letters and as evidenced in his day by day service and sacrifice for Christ.

Those who knew Paul well, loved him deeply (Acts 20. 36-38, 21. 12, 13; Romans 16. 3, 4). The apostle Peter testified through the Spirit to Paul's wisdom and the depth of his teaching (2 Peter 3. 15-16). Luke, Paul's closest friend, in his own inimitable style, and as led by the Holy Spirit, accurately recorded the apostle's labours and persecutions. The records and writings of such a man demand our earnest study.

*L. B.*

## "THE AGES HAVE BEEN FRAMED"

The ages have been framed by the word of God (Hebrews 11. 3 R. V. M. ). The six days of creation, it has been suggested, may speak of the six thousand years since the creation of Adam. The sabbath may speak of the Millennium. Is the sabbatic rest for the people of God mentioned in Hebrews 4. 9 the Millennium [1]?

Have we not in Hosea 5. 15 and 6. 2 an indication when the Lord will come to earth? I have looked on Hosea 5. 15 and 6. 2 this way. We have in verse 15 Christ's life on earth and His ascension to heaven. "I will go and return to my place, till they (Israel) acknowledge their offence (the crucifixion of their Messiah at Calvary) and seek My face: in their affliction they will seek Me earnestly" (the time of Jacob's trouble). Hosea 6. 2: "After two days will He revive us (the present dispensation of grace): on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him" (the Millennium).

*J.*

*Peddie*

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT CONVERSION AND EARLY DAYS

**From** Carlisle. —We read the account of Saul's conversion in Acts 9 and in Galatians 1. 11-17, and realize that his experience was unique. God destined him to be the spearhead of the Christian movement he so hated and despised. Saul was journeying to Damascus at midday. He would not rest until his mission was completed. It happened suddenly, but the reality of his experience left its mark upon Saul and brought blessing to thousands besides.

In later days Paul twice relates the story of his conversion, and by comparing narrative with narrative we can piece the story together. The light blinded him, but the voice awakened him. Question and answer follow, and what emerges from this graphic picture is a man now bent upon surrendering himself to the authority of Jesus of Nazareth: "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22. 10). No longer would he kick against the pricks. Eagerly he pressed on in the darkness towards Damascus, for there it would be told him what he must do. We were impressed by the completeness of Saul's surrender. Self-will gave place to His will, not momentarily, but for a life-time. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision but gladly accepted the challenge it presented. Despised Jesus of Nazareth, now exalted at the right hand of God, was to be revealed in him (Galatians 1. 16) so that he might bring the message of the living Christ to the Gentiles. Special preparation was necessary before Paul could fulfil his God-given mission, and no doubt it was while he was away in Arabia that he was fitted **by** God for his life's work.

*R. H., J. D. T.*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —The threefold account of Paul's conversion leads us to conclude that it is emphasized by the Holy Spirit in order that we may learn valuable lessons regarding the life of the Apostle. After his conversion Paul prayed to God for further guidance (Acts 9. 11). He received the Holy Spirit (verse 17) which would strengthen the view that he had repented and was ready to receive not only physical sight but spiritual illumination also (verse 18). It was no wonder that the Christians in Jerusalem (verse 26) and also Ananias needed persuading that God had marked him out as a chosen vessel (verses 13 and 15). Paul immediately preached Christ, to the amazement of all who heard, knowing what he was previously. Paul had known the Old Testament Scriptures but now he had the key to them all—Christ. It was no wonder that the Jews were confounded by his teaching (verse 22).

When we compare the account in Galatians 1. 15-24 with that in Acts 9 we find certain difficulties. In Galatians 1. 16, 17 we read, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem... but I went away into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus". Acts 9. 19 tells us, "he was certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus". In the same chapter, verse 23, it speaks of "when many days were fulfilled". Perhaps we can suggest the following order of events. After his conversion he spent a few days with the disciples in Damascus and preached in the synagogues. He then went to Arabia (Galatians 1. 17) for an unstated period, where God no doubt gave him a greater revelation and understanding of the Person of Christ and his future work as a minister of the gospel. After three years he paid a short visit to Jerusalem, staying 15 days with Peter and meeting James the Lord's brother (Galatians 1. 18, 19). It would appear that Paul's preaching was at first fairly local (Galatians 1. 21) and he did not commence his great missionary work until at least three years after his conversion (verse 22). God was preparing and fitting him for the purpose for which he was apprehended that day on the Damascus road.

*R. F. Robertson*

**From Methil.**—Saul was struck blind (Acts 9), by "A light out of heaven". In Acts 22. 6, it is described as "a great light"; in Acts 26. 13, "A light from heaven above the brightness of the sun". Saul gave the fullest account of his own conversion. From the beginning to the end of his dealings with the Lord, Saul's fear of the Lord was evident. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9. 10).

Paul was a chosen vessel. He was an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God (Romans 1. 1). It was not through Paul's merit but God's grace that he was called (1 Corinthians 15. 10), according to the foreknowledge of God, long before his birth or his conversion on the Damascus road (2 Timothy 1. 9). The Lord revealed to Ananias that this man Paul, whom so many saints feared, was soon to bear the Lord's Name before Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel (Acts 9. 15). We noted that Gentiles were mentioned first (Acts 9. 15), probably because this was the special work that the Lord had for him to do (Galatians 2. 8, 1. 16; Romans 15. 16). He was an apostle of the Gentiles (Romans 11. 13). How many things Paul was to suffer for the sake of the Name of the Lord Jesus! He was soon to know the bitter opposition and persecution himself (2 Corinthians 11. 23-27) when others took counsel to kill him (Acts 9. 23).

When he received his sight, he arose and was baptized, then he took food and was strengthened. He spent some days with the disciples in Damascus. Was there a church of God there at this time? We believe so. We consider his disciples (Acts 9. 25) to be those who had believed through Paul's word. In contrast the disciples who were at Jerusalem are mentioned in verse 26.

The Gospel message came to Paul through a direct revelation of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1. 12). Paul was called to reveal God's Son in him, and that mainly to the Gentiles. Paul's early journeys were from Damascus to Arabia, then to Damascus again and then to Jerusalem approximately three years after his conversion.

*N. G. Coomer, D. B. Reid*

## EXTRACTS

**From Derby.**—Saul's whole life was changed by a revelation from God of Jesus Christ: the only way anyone's life can be changed. "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest", he believed and was ready to go in whatever course he was directed. In his three days of waiting in blindness at Damascus, Saul no doubt wondered about his future, and prayed to his God for help in what lay ahead. When he had received his sight his first act was to proclaim in the synagogues that Jesus was the Son of God. He then went into Arabia, and there had communion with God and spiritual building up, such as every man of God, however great his natural ability, must have before he is ready to teach men. If Saul had not received revelations from God he would never have been fit to be God's instrument. He had natural gifts, then he received spiritual gifts.

*P. L. H.*

**From Birmingham.** —Saul's experience was exceptional in having such a revelation of the ascended, glorified Lord and in hearing His voice from Heaven. In the mercy of God, his experience came near the end of the journey, for he was led by the hand, blind, into Damascus. His actual conversion appears to have been at the instant the Lord said to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest". Later in writing to the Galatians concerning the gospel he said, "Neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ".

His immense spiritual knowledge came by direct revelation of God and he became a channel through which great truths and mysteries were revealed; much church truth came from his pen. Paul received instruction as to baptism from Ananias in Damascus. How quickly he assimilated the knowledge of the ways of the Lord! He proclaimed Jesus as the Son of God in Damascus. We find difficulty in tracing the movements of Paul after the disciples lowered him down in a basket through the wall, and would welcome help on this point [2]. Why did he go to Arabia?  
*H. Smith*

**From Glasgow, Parkhead.** —There is no question that God was already dealing with Saul before his conversion. He was one of God's chosen vessels. One has remarked that perhaps momentarily "Saul thinking that by his works he was offering service to God, accepted the sudden opening of heaven as a special honour conferred upon him" [3]. What a tremendous overthrow in the life of Saul to hear the words, "Why persecutest thou Me?" This was the double knock of the God of heaven, and Saul must give answer. Saul's first desire was to get to know the One who spoke, and having obtained a miraculous revelation of Christ, Saul immediately surrendered his life to the One who had stopped his wild career, saying, "What shall I do, Lord?"

The Lord well knew the attendant difficulties of this course and so He led Paul to Arabia for a time in order that he might receive his teaching directly from Himself. It is evident that some had difficulty over the matter of salvation without circumcision, but Paul was able to withstand them, knowing of whom he had received his teaching. The adversary had struck a severe blow at the gospel of Christ but God had prepared His man (Galatians 2. 11-14).  
*R. J. Shaw*

**From Kingston upon Thames.** —What a revelation to Saul to see the Lord whom he thought to be a blasphemer and impostor, now raised from the dead! "I am Jesus," came the voice of Him whose glory temporarily blinded him. To Agrippa (Acts 26. 8) he said, "Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?". He was to bear witness to Gentiles, kings, rulers and the children of Israel (Acts 9. 15). The leader spent the next three days in prayer, and then Ananias came.

Paul's dynamic personality is seen in Acts 9. 22, serving Jesus and testifying to His resurrection both in Damascus and Jerusalem (9. 27-29): an example which we all would do well to emulate. After being in Arabia, where he no doubt received much of the doctrine from the Lord as recorded in his epistles, he returned to Damascus. Three years after his conversion he visited Jerusalem. Are the visits of Acts 9. 26 and Galatians 1. 18 the same [4]?  
*L. Parker*

**From Edinburgh.** —After his conversion, Paul proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God, confounding the Jews until they took counsel to kill him. Although they were assisted by the governor (2 Corinthians 11. 32), Paul escaped from Damascus in a basket and went to Arabia [5]. There, we believe, he had revelations of the Lord. Paul makes it clear that his knowledge of the Lord and His things was not from man but by revelation. God called him to reveal His Son, not only to Paul, but in him.

Three years after his conversion Paul went to Jerusalem and Barnabas took him to the apostles, of whom he saw only Peter and James the Lord's brother. There were some who doubted if James actually was an apostle [6]. We believe an apostle is one who saw the Lord, especially in His resurrection and was appointed by Him to an apostleship. The Lord appeared to Paul "as unto one born out of **due time**" (1 Corinthians 9. 1, 15. 8). *William C. Taylor*

From Vancouver, B. C. —Is it not true that when a sinner is saved by God's grace, many changes take place? This was Paul's experience. His heart and his mode of life were changed. He had a new Master. In Acts 13. 9 we read that his name was changed: this was significant in that Saul is a Hebrew word and Paul is Roman.

Despite the fact that Paul was separated unto God from his mother's womb this change of heart was necessary. The dialogue which occurred between the Voice from heaven and Saul is interesting to note. Saul addressed Him as "Lord". He had not yet gained this new concept of Jesus as Messiah and Saviour since the word "Lord" used is the same as that translated "Jehovah" in the O. T. (Sept. ). He was soon corrected and introduced to the Saviour by the words, "**I am Jesus whom thou persecutest**". *J. Pope and J. Bell, Jr.*

**From Atherton.** —When did Saul become an Apostle? Two thoughts are suggested: (1) That he was constituted an apostle in the words of the Lord on the Damascus road: ". . . the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee" (Acts 26. 17). (2) That he actually saw the Lord during his stay in Arabia, and the call to apostleship was made there. Note the context of Galatians 1. 15-17, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went away into Arabia". At that time he received from the Lord what he himself delivered to others (1 Corinthians 11. 23; see also 1 Corinthians 15. 3-9).

What does "wash away thy sins" mean? (Acts 22. 16). This was for Paul a public act before men to indicate the complete change wrought by the Lord on the Damascus road [7]. It was necessary that the Jews should show an outward sign of their repentance as those who crucified the Messiah. *R. A. Jones, G. A. J.*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Paul set off on a journey to Damascus that was to go down in history. The light from Heaven shone and the voice said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me". In answer to the voice which spoke to him he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?" and the answer came back, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest".

Saul was brought face to face with the Lord Himself. When he rose he was blind. The Lord never forces a believer to do anything against his will. Saul was told to enter Damascus and it would be told him what to do. For three days he prayed to the Lord. Ananias in a vision was given clear instructions by the Lord as to what he had to do: he was told in no uncertain manner, Saul "is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9. 15). So he laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul", and told him to arise and be baptized. If Paul was to be a bright shining light for the Master, he must have his time in Arabia. He then returned to Damascus to tell the people what great things the Lord had done for him. After three years Saul went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas.

*W. S. Johnston*

From Southport. —Saul was three days without food and sight. We may wonder why Ananias was not sent immediately. A struggle must have taken place. The Lord said, "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (or goads)". We do not read the details of the struggle prior to his conversion.

After his conversion, Paul conferred not with flesh and blood, but went into Arabia and then returned to Damascus. In Damascus the Jews sought to kill him, watching the gates both day and night. This was only the beginning of the suffering for the Name of Christ. The disciples at Jerusalem were afraid of him but Barnabas took him to the apostles. Then Paul came to Syria and Cilicia and they glorified God in him. He persecuted no longer but preached, and he was now persecuted by his previous friends, the Jews. His name was changed. What are the meanings of the two names [8]? He travelled to persecute the disciples, but he travelled much further to spread the **Name** of Christ, **even** to Rome.

*D. G. Lightfoot*

**From** Liverpool. —Saul's mind was surely in a state of turmoil just prior to his conversion. He could not have helped but contrast his own tortured state of mind with the peace the Christians showed as they faced death. "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad" said the Lord Jesus. On the other hand it was suggested that I Timothy 1. 13 and Acts 24. 16 showed that Saul's conscience had never troubled him [9]. He uses some revealing phrases to describe his conversion (e. g. Philippians 3. 12; 2 Corinthians 4. 6; Galatians 1. 16).

We noticed that when Saul was commissioned to preach the gospel in Acts 9. 15, the Gentiles are mentioned before the Jews whereas Paul approached Jews before he went to the Gentiles. We could only assume here that the order was one of priority. After all, he was the apostle of the Gentiles.

When life got too difficult for Saul in Jerusalem he was sent by the brethren to Tarsus. He seems to have spent the time evangelizing in Syria and Cilicia [10] because we read that during Paul's second missionary journey they "went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches" (Acts 15. 41) whereas we do not read of anyone else visiting the region before that.

*D. E. H.*

From Crowborough. —When Paul found out that Jesus was the Son of God, there was no turning back; he said, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22. 10). He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. He was baptized, and after certain days with the disciples he proclaimed that Jesus was the Son of God, which truth was from then on a distinctive

point in his ministry. Regarding the revelation of the Lord to him, it is noticeable how Jesus is brought before him: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest" (9. 5, 26. 15), "Jesus of Nazareth" (22. 8), "The Lord even Jesus..." (9. 17). He says in 1 Corinthians 9. 1, "Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?". Unmistakably he knew now that Jesus of Nazareth was not dead but alive. The apostle had seen Him and he could testify to His resurrection.

The Jews in Damascus sought to kill him after his return from Arabia but he escaped in a basket over the wall and went to Jerusalem. He received his message by revelation from God and not from man. He was not in any way inferior to the other apostles. **J. H. B.**

**From Hamilton.** —Saul kicked against the pricks, and in fury sought to destroy the disciples of the Lord (Acts 8. 3, 9. 1). He went to Damascus "breathing threatening and slaughter". It was midday; a light shone round about him, and Saul and his travelling companions fell to earth (Acts 9. 4, 26. 14).

A voice called "Saul, Saul" (Acts 9. 4; compare Genesis 22. 11; Exodus 3. 4; 1 Samuel 3. 10) and later the voice said, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest" (Acts 22. 8). It must have been a shock to hear that despised name "Jesus of Nazareth" but the shock produced results. Though trembling and astonished, Saul said, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22. 10). Saul had heard the voice of the Lord Jesus and as a result was converted. Conversion means a change of direction, a change of goal, and change from man's way to God's way. Saul's conversion dates from the moment he turned towards that voice out of heaven and said, "Lord". The results of conversion were soon evident. Saul made his way into Damascus not because of authority from the High Priest but because of the Lord's command (Acts 9. 6).

*M. C.*

**From Glasgow, Govan and Partick.** —The Gentiles were impressed with the striking manner of Paul's conversion, judging from their reactions to his testimony. To us it is a sign of the importance of the man and the work he was to perform, summed up in the words to Ananias: "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto Me..." The loss of sight seems to have been not only a sign to all who heard of it, but also a rebuke (compare the incident of Bar-Jesus, in Acts 13). The restoration of sight was accompanied by the filling with the Holy Spirit. When reading his words to king Agrippa, "Wherefore... I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision", one is reminded of those who were disobedient: Jonah, for example, and the trouble he caused until he had learned his lesson. Saul, the scholar, equipped with an immense textual knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures needed all the more preparation and training to reorientate his thoughts. Thus he was physically incapacitated for three days and spent three years in Arabia, it seems for this very purpose.

*Martin Archibald*

**Front Paisley.** —The eternal friendship begun on the Damascus road blossomed as all such should (see 1 John 1. 3 and 7). Old companionships ended and new ones began. Saul was baptized and continued in fellowship with the disciples in Damascus (Acts 9. 18, 19). In the light of Acts 2. 41, 42, it seems superfluous to add that there was a church of God in Damascus and that Saul was added thereto.

Reborn, Saul's days of first love were spent (as were many to come) in a foreign city (Acts 26. 20). Early in his new life he went away into Arabia (Galatians 1. 17). Preparatory periods of being alone with God are necessary if children of God are to become men of God. It would seem that here he "received of the Lord" that which he was to deliver to men, Gentiles in particular; else he could not claim (Galatians 1. 12) that his teaching did not come to him from the Lord through other men. For the same reason he could not have been initially long in Damascus. The Acts 9 narrative suggests that his Arabian stay was likewise short, for he is presented as being continually in the forefront as regards witnessing, which a long absence would tend to nullify.

It is important to note that on his return he did not proceed straight to those in Jerusalem but stayed in what was a remote, perhaps even isolated, assembly for some three years [11]. Honest labour in a church of God was as necessary as time spent alone with God to the great apostle of the Gentiles. So it is with all who would be men of God.

*Ian Penn*

From Leicester. —Saul, full of fiery zeal, carried his persecution of the Christians beyond Judaea as far as the city of Damascus, having done his best to rid Jerusalem of the hated followers of Jesus of Nazareth. So, in his passion and armed with authority from the High Priest, he set out on his journey. But suddenly near his journey's end, the light of the midday sun was surpassed by a heavenly shaft of brightness that struck him and his company to the ground. Lying there he heard a voice which spoke to him in the Hebrew language, and looking up he saw the One who thus personally addressed him as "Saul, Saul". It seems that none of those accompanying him either saw the vision or understood the language, although they did hear the sound of the voice. But Saul, although perhaps at the time not fully understanding what was happening, never doubted that the Lord actually appeared to him.

After being led blinded into Damascus and having received his sight by the laying on of Ananias's hands, he was baptized to demonstrate to all that he was now a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

*M. S. Elliott, G. M. Hydon*

**From Brantford, Ontario.** —Saul, with Damascus as his goal, and carrying letters from the High Priest, set out on his journey, but as he came near to the city that great light out of heaven shone round about him, that voice spoke to him, "Saul, Saul", and that wondrous revelation, "I am Jesus" was given to him. The zealous persecutor was brought to the ground. Never could Saul forget that moment: the beginning for him of a life of devoted service to the Lord Jesus. The men with Saul stood speechless. They saw the light and heard the sound, but the words were for Saul. Upon rising from the ground he found that he was deprived of his natural sight but he was delivered from the error of his ways through receiving spiritual sight. During these three days of blindness Saul gave himself to prayer. In accordance with the Lord's instructions, Ananias went to Saul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit. Saul was baptized and added to the disciples and was soon preaching and testifying concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1] (**J. Peddie**)—The sabbatic rest is the same rest as dealt with in Hebrews 3 and 4; it is God's rest for His people now. *J. M.*

[2] (**Birmingham**)—The lowering of Paul over the wall in a basket took place after his return from Arabia. From Damascus he went to Jerusalem to visit Peter (Galatians 1. 18). *J. M.*

[3] (**Glasgow, Parkhead**)—I feel sure that no such a thought as the Lord's appearance to Paul was regarded as an honour by Paul. *J. M.*

[4] (**Kingston upon Thames**)—Yes, the visits of Paul to Jerusalem in Acts 9. 26, and Galatians 1. 18, are the same. *J. M.*

[5] (**Edinburgh**)—Our friends are confused as to Paul's movements. The visit of Paul to Arabia took place between verses 22 and 23 of Acts 9. After being in Arabia he returned to Damascus (Galatians 1. 17). After being in Damascus and having made disciples his life was sought, and he was let down over the wall in a basket and then went to Jerusalem to visit Peter, and the events of Acts 9. 26-30 took place. *J. M.*

[6] (**Edinburgh**)—The structure of the words of Galatians 1. 19 show clearly that James the Lord's brother was an apostle. *J. M.*

[7] (**Atherton**)—Baptism in water never removed sins before God. It was a public act, as our friends suggested, before men. *J. M.*

[8] (**Southport**)—The Hebrew name Saul means "asked". Paul, a Roman name, is said to mean "little". *J. M.*

[9] (**Liverpool**)—See answer [1] to Southport. *J. M.*

[10] (**Liverpool**)—Paul after being sent by the brethren in Jerusalem to Tarsus (Acts 9. 30) does not appear in the Acts again until Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek for him, and brought him to Antioch (Acts 11. 22-26). This was a long time before the time of Acts 15. 41. *J. M.*

[II] (**Paisley**)—It depends on how long our friends count a short stay in Arabia. Paul was only certain days in Damascus after his conversion (Acts 9. 19). From "when many days were fulfilled" which covers his stay in Arabia and his second visit to Damascus, I would think that his second visit to Jerusalem was not long, so that the three years from his conversion to his going up to Jerusalem were, I judge, for the most part spent in Arabia. *J. M.*

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question from Edinburgh**—When did Paul become an apostle?

**Answer**—Paul was a chosen vessel (Acts 9. 15). His salvation and calling were not according to his works, but according to God's purpose and grace given to him in Christ Jesus before times eternal, and he was appointed by God a preacher and an apostle and a teacher (2 Timothy 1. 9-11). He says that God separated him even from his mother's womb to such a work as in 2 Timothy 1. 9-11, but neither he nor any other man knew this (Galatians 1. 15). This was in the secret of divine counsel. Not till the Holy Spirit spoke, and consequently Barnabas and Saul were separated by the calling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13. 1-3), did men know that Barnabas and Paul were apostles (Acts 14. 14). *J. M.*

**Questions from Southport**—(1) What is the meaning of: "it is hard for thee to kick against the goad"?

(2) In Acts 26 there is no mention of Ananias but Paul appears to have a direct revelation from the Lord. What is the explanation of this?

(3) How was it that the men with Paul are said in Acts 9. 7 to have heard the voice, whereas in Acts 22. 9 it says that they beheld the light but heard not the voice?

(4) At what point was Saul saved?

(5) Please explain Acts 22. 16, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins". Was this John's baptism?

**Answers**—(1) Paul claims to have always lived with a pure conscience (2 Timothy 1. 3); that was, that in his unconverted days he lived according to the teaching of the law and the traditions of his fathers, and when by the grace of God he was saved, he faithfully followed the revelation of His will. But the goad (or pricks) was, I judge, the circumstances of life in which he saw the grace, faith and courage of the saints who suffered at his hand and the hands of others. In particular what he saw in Stephen in his sufferings and death would without doubt affect him. *J. M.*

(2) Paul makes no mention of Ananias to king Agrippa. The fact is you do not find everything in most incidents in Scripture that may be mentioned more than once. I need not stay to prove this from the Gospels. Undoubtedly Paul mentions what the Lord said to him that is not given elsewhere. *J. M.*

(3) Acts 9. 7 says "the voice", which means the sound, and Acts 22. 9 says that they heard not the voice of Him that spoke to Paul, that **is**, they heard not the words that were spoken. *J. M.*

According to Professor E. M. Blaiklock (The Acts of the Apostles, An Historical Commentary), "the verb to *hear* in Greek can govern an accusative (Acts 22. 9) or a genitive (9. 7). The genitive is partitive and in itself conveys the idea that they did not apprehend the sound in its entirety". *L. B.*

(4) Paul was saved on the road outside Damascus when the Lord said, "I **am** Jesus". *J. M.*

(5) No, it was not John's baptism. Moreover water never washed away sins before God, only before men. *J. M.*

**Questions from Liverpool**—(1) Was there a church at Damascus during the events recorded in Acts 9? (2) Did Paul have the Spirit before Ananias laid his hands on him (Acts 9. 17)?

**Answers**—(1) There were those in Damascus who were of the Way (Acts 9. 2), for there were disciples there (verse 19). Though a reference to a church of God in Damascus is not made, yet the fact that Paul was certain days with the disciples there before he went to Arabia and was baptized by them, and then returned from Arabia to Damascus where he himself made disciples, tends to the thought that there was something collective in existence there. *J. M.*

(2) In Acts 2. 4 there is no distinction made between the giving of the *Holy Spirit* and being filled with the *Holy Spirit*. But in Acts 4. 31, those who were gathered in Jerusalem, who had already received the Spirit, were filled with the Spirit. Then we have the exhortation in Ephesians 5. 18, that saints who already had received the Spirit were to be filled with the Spirit. See also in the same sense Acts 13. 52. I would not like to be dogmatic that Paul had not received the *Holy Spirit* till Ananias laid his hands upon him. J. M.

## NOTES ON THE PSALMS

Psalm 35 (continued from page 12)

"Lord, how long wilt Thou look on?

Rescue my soul from their destructions,

My darling from the lions.

I will give Thee thanks in the great congregation:

I will praise Thee among much (mighty and strong) people" (v. 17, 18).

Here again David turns to the LORD and asks how long He would look on the behaviour of those who were so acting towards David, His chosen king. God is ever long-suffering towards those who have been haters of those whom He loved. How many years He allowed Joseph, Jacob's son, to suffer! and how long David suffered! The prosperity of the wicked and their violence was a matter of great difficulty to Asaph the writer of Psalm 73, until he went into the sanctuary of God and saw their end, as God had ever seen it. It is ever important to endeavour to see men and things from God's standpoint, to see the end of the wicked and the future glory of the righteous, as in this psalm. David besought the LORD to rescue him from destructions, and "my darling from the lions". "My darling" means "my only one" and of the Hebrew word here, *yachiyd*, Gesenius says, "only one, hence that which is most dear, poetical for life, Psalm 22. 20". As David thought of divine deliverance, he gave thanks to God in the great congregation, and praise to Him among a mighty people.

"Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me:  
Neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause.  
For they speak not peace:

But they devise deceitful words against them that are quiet in the land.

Yea, they opened their mouth wide against me;

They said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.

Thou hast seen it, O LORD; keep not silence:

O Lord, be not far from me" (verses 19-22).

Here David again pleads with the LORD not to allow his enemies wrongfully to rejoice over him, and he asks that in their crafty ways they may not be allowed to wink with the eye, such as without cause hated him. In my early Christian life the words of Proverbs 10. 10 were quoted to me, "He that winketh with the eye causeth sorrow", and this cured me from winking with the eye ever after. But the sly, cunning people wink with the eye, and think that they are astute and crafty in that in which they engage. David's enemies neither spoke nor desired peace, but they devised deceitful words or matters against those that were quiet in the land. There are those who make it their business to stir up strife and trouble among people who would wish to live quietly. Such people opened their mouth against David. They shouted, "Aha, aha", and claimed what they had seen, but David said, "Thou hast seen it, O LORD; keep not silence", and he besought the LORD not to be far from him. When David had delivered Keilah from the Philistines, it

was told Saul that David was in Keilah. **Then he asked the Lord through the ephod that Abiathar brought, "Will the men of Keilah deliver up me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the LORD said, They will deliver thee up" (1 Samuel 23. 12).** Such was the **ingratitude** of the **men** of Keilah that David had saved. **The men of Keilah had seen, but the LORD had also seen what David had done.**

**"Stir up Thyself, and awake to my judgement,**

**Even unto my cause, my God and my Lord.**

**Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Thy righteousness;**

**And let them not rejoice over me.**

**Let them not say in their heart, Aha, so would we have it:**

**Let them not say, We have swallowed him up.**

**Let them be ashamed and confounded together that rejoice at mine hurt:**

**Let them be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnify themselves against me" (verses 23-26).**

Again, **in view of those who were unfaithful and joined with his bitter enemies, David asked God to stir Himself up and awake to his judgement. He could place his cause before Him who was his God and his Lord. He asked for judgement according to his righteousness. It is well when God's servants can put their case according to their righteousness before God and not seek to be trading on God's grace and mercy in all His dealings with them. He asks that his adversaries may not be allowed to rejoice over him, that they might not say in their hearts, "Aha, so would we have it", that they had swallowed him up. He asks that they may be ashamed and confounded that rejoice in his hurt, and that they may be clothed with shame and dishonour that magnified themselves against him.**

**"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause:**

**Yea, let them say continually, The LORD be magnified,**

**Which hath pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.**

**And my tongue shall talk of Thy righteousness,**

**And of Thy praise all the day long" (verses 27, 28).**

**David's cause was a righteous cause, for he had been anointed by Samuel to be king in the place of Saul. Saul's cause was unrighteous in that he held on to being king though he was told through Samuel of the LORD'S judgement that He had rejected him from being king, and ever after in his jealousy he persecuted David. David calls upon such men in Israel as favoured his righteous cause to shout for joy and be glad, for the day would come when he, who was then rejected, would reign as king. David said, "Let them say continually, The LORD be magnified", such as had pleasure in the prosperity of David, God's servant. He said also, that his tongue would talk of God's righteousness and of His praise all the day long. We shall employ our time well if we follow his great and worthy example.**

**J. M.**

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

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## EDITORIAL

The **close connexion between some of the syllabus** subjects this year has resulted in a number of contributors **writing on matters** which we hope to deal with **under** other headings. To avoid overlapping, **students** should scrutinize the syllabus from time to **time** and **exercise** the discipline of "**keeping** to the subject" during discussion and reporting.

**Some papers** submitted contain **inaccuracies in** Scriptural **references** and quotations. The memory **can** play strange **tricks**, therefore it is always necessary, however familiar the **scriptures** quoted, to check words, punctuation and **references** carefully, **making a** special note **if** the **passage** is from the Authorized Version. We **trust** that these critical **remarks** will be kindly **received** by contributors. *L. B.*

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT "TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST"

**From Vancouver, B. C.** —The two phrases "Christ liveth **in me**", and "To **me** to live is Christ" are closely parallel. The condition described **in the first is** shown **by** its outworking, described **in** the second. It **is** clear that the leading of the **Spirit** of Christ **is** conditional, but not **the** Holy Spirit's indwelling. Paul **says that** he considered all things **as** refuse that he might **gain** Christ. To **gain** the leading of Christ's Spirit **we must cease** to do evil and learn to do well (Isaiah 1. 16, 17).

There **is** always the need **of** living for Christ. We **may speak** but we often do **not** act. **Even** though much detail **is** lacking **in** the account of Paul's life, **we can see that by his** sufferings Paul **practised** what he preached. He **says**, "I bear branded **on my body** the marks of Jesus". This was a fulfilment of **what** was told to Ananias, "I will shew **him** how **many things** he **must** suffer". At the end Paul said, "I have fought the good fight... " **To fight, one** has to **give** all one's exertion, **and Paul spent** all his spiritual life **in the** forefront of the battle. *h Pope, J. Bell, Jr.*

**From Paisley.** —Paul's **statement** (Philippians 1, 20) **indicates** to us how completely his life **was** engrossed **in** the things of Christ. It **was** his desire **in** life **that** Christ should **be** magnified **in** his person and to achieve **this** he was prepared to live **or** die.

What was the secret of Paul's high spiritual attainments? The answer would seem to be found in 2 Corinthians 5. 15. The apostle had died to self, to his pride of birth and to his upbringing under the law. These things were counted as offal, in order that he might gain Christ. It was his desire to know the power of Christ's resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings which caused him to press on towards the goal (Philippians 3. 4-14). Paul died to self, having been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2. 20). The life the apostle now lived was not his own life, but it was the new life he had obtained from Christ who was now living in him. Christ was pre-eminent in Paul's life, therefore he could view death as an immediate gain.

*L. de-Ville*

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —The unsaved man may live for pleasure or ambition, or he may be dedicated to some cause, but the end of this is destruction (Luke 17. 27; Matthew 24. 38). But Paul says, "To me to live is Christ". What seemed loss in the world was gain to Paul. His eyes had been opened. When the Lord Himself was on earth, the four thousand were glad to receive the loaves; their desire did not stay the bounty of God. Neither did man's self-seeking stay the hand of God when he sent His Son. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son". It was the good pleasure of God to reveal His Son in Paul that he might preach Him among the Gentiles (Galatians 1. 16).

Faith was the key to his new life. Paul dared to present himself as a pattern, because to him to live was Christ. Through faith the believer can make a stand against the accuser of the brethren, because "we have an Advocate. And if we confess, God is faithful and righteous to forgive and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1. 9).

*Eric Archibald*

## EXTRACTS

**From Leicester.** —Paul lived a life for Christ, out of a deep and wonderful love for Him. Philippians 1. 19-23 indicates that Paul must have been in close communion with Christ (e. g., "For to me to live is Christ"). But also, even if Paul died, he would have been with Christ, and this would have been gain to him. Thus we also can confidently expect this. 2 Corinthians 5. 14-16 shows us that Paul lived not for himself but for Christ, as also is apparent in Galatians 2. 19, 20.

Whatever Paul may have attained in this life before his conversion, he counted it as loss for the knowledge of Christ; we show our love of Christ by keeping His commandments (John 14. 15). Although Paul had not quite attained this perfection, in 2 Timothy 4. 6-8 Paul "the aged" tells us that he was being poured out as a drink offering, and that he was assured of a "crown of righteousness".

*G. Hydon, I. McLean*

**From Kingston upon Thames.** —Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians in prison. He had faith in his own salvation (Philippians 1. 19) from prison because of the prayers of the Philippians and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. He had the furtherance of the gospel in mind, not his own gain. Paul's aim was to magnify Christ; the verdict of the Roman court would not deflect him from this purpose. Whether the verdict were life or death, there would be perfect submission to God's will. He had no cause to be ashamed, but would speak out boldly. Verse 22 appears to mean that the fruit, or reward, of Paul's work done in the past was that his life would be spared, and it would mean further fruitful labour.

*John Mobey*

**From Liverpool.** —A picture can be drawn from Paul's own words as he goes over his former life. The words of Philippians 3 reveal his national and religious background, "Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ". Now it was—"For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1. 21). Thus he could say, "But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20. 24). The conditions under which he wrote this epistle to the Philippians give added force. Christ would be magnified in his body whether by life or by death (Philippians 1. 20).

There is but one life that can glorify God, the resurrection life, the Christ-filled life. Paul could say, "No longer I, but Christ". Only thus could he look back over his life and say with deep and sincere appreciation and gratitude to the One who had sustained him through a life of humble service, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith" (2 Timothy 4. 7). AM.

**From Derby.** —Paul's conversion marked a great change in his life. Previously he had been full of pride in his nationality, his sect and his own zeal; but he avowed that henceforth the sole purpose of his life on earth would be to magnify the person of Christ in his body. The centre of his life would be Christ; and he was willing to throw aside as worthless all the prizes that his country and the world could offer, even to the extent of giving up his life, if this were necessary. Paul's intention was that his body should be used, not as something to be seen, but as something through which Christ could be made more clear to others.

Some asked if Paul really constantly lived in the light of this precept. It was thought that this statement was the aim that Paul had set before him, the wish of his "inward man", and in spite of what he wrote in Romans 7. 18, 23 (which is true of all believers), he still looked towards Christ as his Leader and Master in his earthly life.

**From Birmingham.** —"To me to live is Christ" was the basis of all Paul's progress and triumphs. He buffeted his body about to bring it into subjection, and crucified the old man daily, not letting it get the pre-eminence. So Paul could say "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me". So he lived not unto himself. He counted all things, his entire worldly estate, to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. He pressed on to the goal of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. We consider that to seek to "attain unto the resurrection from the dead" would be to have the same high calling in view [1].

*D. P. Brown*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Longing to be like Christ involved for Paul great bodily affliction. The apostle Peter wrote, "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example" (1 Peter 2. 21). This is not the suffering for sin, but for righteousness' sake. Perhaps of all the Lord's servants, none suffered more than Paul. Through it all, he remained unswerving in his loyalty to his Lord. The love of doing the will of God far outweighed any consideration for his own personal safety. He knew a joy in suffering (Colossians 1. 24). Such a one knew, and desired to know more, the fellowship of Christ's suffering (Philippians 3. 10).

When God revealed His Son in him, those Jewish honours which seemed gain were accounted as refuse (Philippians 3. 5-8). He renounced the bright prospect of earthly fame, counting it dross, to become a bondservant of Jesus Christ, the highest and greatest career in the world. To gain Christ, Paul turned from the world with its pretence, pomp, pleasures and pursuits. The heart-searching words are, "For me to live is Christ". Christ was his life; no longer was he Saul, the learned zealous Pharisee, but the disciple of the despised Nazarene. Rightly he could say, "By the grace of God I am what I am".

*Jas. C. Watt*

**From Southport.** —Paul had ever before him this great end: that he might attain to the resurrection of the faithful at the coming of Christ, to which he refers more fully in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-17 [2]. Paul teaches the Philippians that those who are perfect will show it by striving, as he strived, after perfection. It is evident that the perfect are contrasted with those who are babes in Christ (1 Corinthians 14. 20). See also Ephesians 4. 13 (A. V.): 'Till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ'.

In 2 Corinthians 5. 14-16 Paul sets forth the love exhibited by Christ, constraining us to give ourselves to His service, even as He gave Himself for us. He has paid the penalty of sin, and they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again. In verse 16 Paul speaks of men, not according to any worldly standard, but as they are spiritually connected with Christ. If any had known Christ after the flesh, they know Him so no more, but as He is now in heaven enthroned in power, not indeed without a body of flesh, but having that body marvellously glorified.

*Thomas Brown*

**From Methil.** —By relinquishing self, Paul had advanced in the knowledge of Christ. His desire was to know Him. How different this is from knowing about Him! Paul's concern was the furtherance of the gospel and, as he reflected on the things that had happened to him, he could say that these had "fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel" (Philippians 1. 12).

Other apostles had known the Lord personally while He walked with them around Galilee, but not so Paul. He knew Him as the resurrected One who had appeared unto him and had revealed Himself to him. As crucified with Christ he lived, yet no longer for himself, for Christ lived in him, and the life which he lived in the flesh he lived in faith which is in the Son of God (Galatians 2. 20). The more we know of the crucified One, and of His resurrection, the more we shall know Him and be able to glorify Him in our bodies.

We thought of the many afflictions Paul had to pass through (2 Corinthians 12. 9, 10). How triumphant and victorious he was! To others not of "the Way" his life must have appeared as a disaster, a lost life. The truth of the words, "All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3. 12), was very real to him, for he had certainly passed through the deep waters of affliction.

*Iain T. H. Hunter*

**From Atherton.** —The word "magnify" means to enlarge, to render conspicuous, hence to exalt, to extol. Saul had magnified himself against the Lord and His disciples. The "earnest expectation and hope" to which he refers in Philippians 1. 20 indicates a watchfulness, an eager objective before him in turning away from all else, so that He to whom he formerly acted contrary should be magnified in the apostle, whether by life or by death. Now he was in Christ and Christ in him. His practical everyday experience was to live Christ. The Spirit of Christ, His ways, thoughts and motives characterized Paul. His words and actions are ample proof of this. His epistles reflect an intense love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and meekness, an evidence of the impressive statement, "Christ liveth in me".

In Galatians 2. 20 Paul writes, "I have been crucified with Christ". Judicially this is a once-for-all condition, and yet so often the old nature asserts itself, gaining prominence, making the divine purpose in the death and resurrection of Christ to appear of no effect.

*E. Birchall, G. A. J.*

**From Wigan.** —We contrasted the two declarations of the apostle, both made in full assurance. In the first, with life before him and many battles to be fought, he declares his life's objective and purpose: "To me to live is Christ". In the second, looking back, he declares a life's achievement: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness" (2 Timothy 4. 6-8).

The first was spoken in circumstances which would have caused most to despair and doubt, but Paul was confident that through the prayers of the saints and the supply of the Holy Spirit he would be saved from these. Perplexed, yet not unto despair (2 Corinthians 4. 8), he would boldly magnify Christ Jesus in his body, either in life or by dying for the testimony of Christ which, he says, would be gain.

Becoming conformed unto His death (Philippians 3. 10) involves taking up one's cross daily (Luke 9. 23), dying daily (1 Corinthians 15. 31), always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus (2 Corinthians 4. 10).

We consider being crucified with Christ (Galatians 2. 20) different from becoming conformed unto his death. Yet both are to the end that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body. *J. H.*

**From Hamilton.** —The apostle Paul rejoiced that Christ was preached, even though it be to the diminution of himself; this noble spirit appeared in John the Baptist in his public preaching of Christ (John 3. 29-30). The great desire of the apostle was that the Lord Jesus should be magnified in his body. In this he was willing to serve His designs and be instrumental to His glory with every member of his body as well as faculty of his soul (Romans 12. 1; 6. 13). The apostle says that it is for the glory of Christ that we should serve Him boldly and not be ashamed of Him.

It is the undoubted character of every true disciple of our Lord Jesus that for him to live is Christ. The example shown by the apostle declares that the glory of Christ ought to be the end of our life, the grace of Christ the principle of our life and the word of Christ the rule of our life. *Andrew A. Collington*

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Although some may have known Christ after the flesh, they knew Him so no more, but being a new creation in Christ, were brought into a different relationship to Him and God, being now children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 16).

Paul in 2 Timothy 4. 6-8 reviewed his life-work for Christ, having come near to the end of his journey. Confidently he sums up his life, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith". Thus confidently he looked forward to that time when, being with Christ, he will be rewarded for the life he lived here on this earth for Christ. *Fred Harvey*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —Paul sought always to be like Christ. He was a dedicated man because the deep love of Christ had constrained him to live no longer unto himself but unto the One who loved him and gave Himself up for him (Galatians 2. 20).

The Colossian saints were urged by letter, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" and also, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly". He certainly knew and experienced both of these, for in the Acts we clearly see that after his conversion he allowed Christ to rule his life **and** he straightway proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God (Acts 9. 20) and proved that He is the Christ (9. 22).

Paul's writings enlightened us as to how we can live Christ. The old man having been crucified, Christ should fill our whole sanctified beings.  
*Mark McKaig*

**From Carlisle.** —The apostle's individuality and personality, as we see from Galatians 2, were not lost or impaired through his being crucified with Christ. They were transformed and infused with the beautiful characteristics of the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself up for him. The totality of Paul's committal of his life to Christ was its own assurance that all that happened to him was in God's perfect purpose; the eternal weight of glory always overwhelmed in his thoughts the light affliction which is for a moment. We are often well advised to question whether trials are not sometimes of our own making, but the truly yielded life suffers no such complications. So there is no unwarranted presumption in the claim, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness". Lest we be overwhelmed by a sense of inadequacy in these great matters, we read on, "also to all them that have loved His appearing". Only the love of Christ filling otherwise emptied hearts can bring the disciples to a truly Christ-centred life, and this surely involves the deeply spiritual exercise of Romans 6. 11: "Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus". *J. D. T., R. H.*

**From Edinburgh.** —In considering the apostle's words in Philippians 1. 21 and in Galatians 2. 20 it is important to realize that he wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit. It was no presumption on Paul's part so to write. The record of Paul's spiritual life shows that he had attained a very high level indeed. He is an example to every man who would try to mould his spiritual life and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ after the same fashion. Paul's life from his conversion to the time he wrote from his prison cell to the Philippians had not been an easy one. He had known hardship and persecution in many places and many forms.

Yet in it all his concern was that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death (Philippians 1. 20, 21). What filled his vision was not the injustice of being in prison, nor was it his uncomfortable cell with its bonds; it was Christ. What counted was not where he lived, but how he lived and the One who lived in him (Galatians 2. 20). Paul's sense of values was not to be measured by the commercial standards of men. The knowledge of Christ and the righteousness which is of God through faith in Christ were the two outstanding things of value in the apostle's life. *M. D.*

## COMMENTS

[1] (**Birmingham**)—It is, I think, helpful to observe the cycle in Paul's words in Philippians 3. 10, 11: "That I may know Him, (1) and the power of His resurrection, (2) and the fellowship of His sufferings, (3) becoming conformed unto His death; (4) if by any means I may attain unto the (out) resurrection from (*EK*, out of) dead (ones)". Here we have a cycle—resurrection, sufferings, death, resurrection. He was thus by suffering and death acquiring resurrection life to rise from the dead: from those who are dead spiritually. *J. M.*

[2] (**Southport**)—Resurrection, mentioned twice in Philippians 3. 10, 11, is not what Paul described in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-17, but the continual experience in his present life. He ever went higher and higher, by resurrection, sufferings, death and resurrection in the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. There is no way to rise higher other than this. *J. M.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question from Birmingham**—We would value help on the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5. 16.

**Answer**—It was quite a possibility that some who had known Christ after the flesh were still alive when 2 Corinthians was written, for such as were a new creation in Christ Jesus could know Him in no such sense any more. He was to all these as the Son of God and God the Son. Such a statement as to knowing Christ after the flesh can have no application today nor for a long, long time past. *J. M.*

**Question from Glasgow (Parkhead)**—Is the expression, "Help me to kill this self (P. H. S. S. 296) doctrinally correct, since the words "I have been crucified" (Galatians 2. 20) and related scriptures imply a past event which does not need to be repeated.

**Answer**—It is true of all saved persons that they have been crucified with Christ (Galatians 2. 20), but has not our questioner overlooked Galatians 5. 24? Compare: "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified (Aorist I indicative, *active*) the flesh" with "have **been** crucified (Perfect indicative *passive*) with Christ". In Galatians 2. 20 it is something that was done for Paul the effect of which abides, whereas what is said in Galatians 5. 24 is what those in view did for themselves.

## PSALM 36

This psalm is of David the servant of the LORD. This is also stated in the heading of Psalm 18, and God calls David "My servant" in Psalm 89. 3, 20. This verse 20 is cited in Acts 13. 22, as to God finding David, a servant who would do all God's will.

"The transgression of the wicked saith (uttereth as an oracle) within my heart,  
There is no fear of God before his eyes.  
For he flattereth himself in his own eyes,  
That his iniquity shall not be found out and be hated" (verses 1, 2).

The transgression of the wicked lets itself be heard in the heart of such as fear God, and its voice is, that there is no fear of God before his eyes. He flattereth himself that his iniquity shall not be found and be hated or hateful. What a difference it might make in the lives of men, if they thought and knew that all their works are being recorded in the books of God, and that all would come up for judgement! (Revelation 20. 12; Matthew 16. 27). The Lord said, "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matthew 12. 36, 37).

"The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit;  
He hath left off to be wise and to do good.  
He deviseth iniquity upon his bed;  
He setteth himself in a way that is not good;  
He abhorreth no evil" (verses 3, 4).

There is agreement between the words and works of the wicked. "Wicked" describes a person who is wrong, bad and unrighteous. His mouth utters iniquity and deceit, and he has ceased to be wise and to do good. His mind is at work on his bed devising iniquity. He puts himself in a way that is not good, and does not abhor evil. Such a person is morally wrong, and actively bad.

"Thy lovingkindness, O LORD, is in the heavens;  
Thy faithfulness Teacheth unto the skies.  
Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God;  
Thy judgements are a great deep:  
O LORD, Thou preservest man and beast" (verses 5, 6).

Here the psalmist draws a vast difference between the LORD and the wicked, and he speaks of the vastness of God's lovingkindness (mercy), faithfulness, righteousness and judgements. Had God been like man in His works and ways the universe would have long since been destroyed. But because of the perfection of God in all His attributes, as mentioned here, all things hold together and continue as they have since the beginning. He "is the Saviour (or Preserver) of all men, specially of them that believe" (1 Timothy 4. 10). Here the psalmist speaks of God who is perfect in His goodness as the Preserver of man and beast.

"How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God!  
And the children of **men take refuge** under the shadow of Thy wings.

**They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness** of Thy house;  
**And** Thou shalt **make them** drink of the **river** of Thy pleasures.  
For with Thee **is the fountain** of life:

**In Thy light shall we see light"** (verses 7-9).

**These verses are full of marrow and fatness to the spiritually minded, but** they contain no meaning to **such as seek their joys in things** material. The lovingkindness or **mercy** of God **is an** exceedingly precious **thing** to those who know their own wretchedness **in this scene** of change and sorrow. **But** for the **mercy** of God to **us sinners there** would be **few eyes free** from tears, therefore how precious **is His mercy!** Happy will those **be** who **take refuge under the shadow** of **His wings.** The **wings of the LORD are** no doubt those of the cherubim that **stretched up** and over the **Mercy-seat** which was **the throne of Jehovah in the midst** of Israel. **It was** from the blood-sprinkled **Mercy-seat** that the **mercy** of God flowed out to Israel. **It was** of this that Boaz spoke to Ruth when he said, "The LORD recompense thy work, **and a full reward be** given thee of the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou **art come to take refuge"** (Ruth 2. 12). She had said to Naomi her mother-in-law, "Thy people shall **be my people,** and thy God **my God"** (1. 16). The Lord Jesus **is the Antitype** of the **Mercy-seat,** and **He** said with **great** sorrow, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, **even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings,** and **ye would not!"** (Matthew 23, 37).

Only the spiritually **minded** who knew that the LORD dwelt **in the house of God** could **be satisfied** with the **fatness** of **His house,** for it was **true** oftentimes,

"The **ways** of Zion do mourn, **because** none come to the solemn assembly" (Lamentations 1, 4).

**As** with the satisfaction of the **fatness** of **God's house,** so the spiritual people **drank** there of the **river** of God's pleasures. There was **in David's time** nothing to **be seen** naturally, the **tent** that he pitched for the **Ark** was **in Zion,** and the Tabernacle that Moses **made** was **in the high place at Gibeon,** for the God of Israel **never went back** to that tabernacle when **He departed from it in Shiloh.** There was no place for the spiritually-minded like Zion, where was the **Ark** and the **Mercy-seat,** the throne of Jehovah. The LORD was there **and** that was what **mattered,** for **He was there in a sense** that **He** was nowhere else on earth. There they could drink **of the river** of **His pleasures.** **He** has said **of Zion,**

"This **is my resting place for ever;**

**Here will I dwell, for I have desired it"** (Psalm 132, 14).

**He** who **is the Fountain of Life** was there, **and in His light men** of faith could **see light.** These **verses** of Psalm 36 **are** not the composed wishful thinking of a poet, **but** were the experience of David and all **men** of faith, who knew the blessedness of **being in the house of God** and the blessedness **of knowing the God of the house.**

"O continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee;  
 And Thy righteousness to the upright in heart.  
 Let not the foot of pride come against me,  
 And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.  
 There are the workers of iniquity fallen:  
 They are thrust down, and shall not be able to rise" (verses  
 10-12).

David pleads for a continuance of God's lovingkindness to them that know God. This is not to know about God. Many know about God who have no personal knowledge of Him. Similarly many believe about Christ who do not believe in Him. The facts of His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection and ascension to heaven are known about by many who have no personal faith in Him, who is the only Saviour, who through His death and resurrection can save us lost sinners. It is the personal knowledge of God the Father that means everything to those who seek to live near to Him. The upright in heart need to know the righteousness of God, one who will cause them to reap as they sow, who is righteous in all His ways. David also thinks of the foot of pride and the hand of the wicked. It is possible to have been kicked by the foot of pride which has left its marks. Paul had many marks, and all who faithfully serve God have them too. It is still sadder to be driven away by the hand of the wicked. David said to Saul that he had been driven out, that he should not cleave unto the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go serve other gods. Saul's reply to David was that he had sinned, and he had played the fool, and erred exceedingly in his actions toward David (1 Samuel 26, 19-21). What a confession by Saul! They were his last words to David. How true are the last words of the psalm as to Saul and his house, and also all that supported that king; they fell, being thrust down, and were not able to rise. The family of Saul never rose again. *J. M.*

### PSALM 37

The psalm is "of David". It is one of the alphabetical psalms of which there are seven, numbers 25, 34, 37, **111**, **112**, **119** and 145. Part of a verse, a verse, two verses, three verses, or, as in the case of Psalm **119**, eight verses, are under each of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Psalm **119** is the most outstanding of the alphabetical psalms, in which there are 22 sections of eight verses each, making 176 verses.

David writes several times of the evil of fretting. He says,  
 "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers,  
 Neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness.  
 For they shall soon be cut down like the grass,  
 And wither as the green herb" (verses 1, 2).

To fret (Hebrew *charah*) means to be kindled with anger. We have a similar word in Proverbs 24 to that of David in the above verses:

"Fret not thyself because of evil-doers;  
 Neither be thou envious at the wicked:  
 For there will be no reward to the evil man;  
 The lamp of the wicked shall be put out" (verses 19, 20).

There **are** few, **if any**, who are anxious to **see right things being** done who have not inwardly **fretted because** of those **that did** wrong, and have **been** envious of those who **were** prosperous, **yet** wrought unrighteousness. This was the trouble of **Asaph** in the greater **part** of Psalm 73. **Asaph's feet had** well nigh slipped **as he saw** the prosperity of the wicked, who were not in trouble like other men. **Such** was the outward view of those **men's apparent** success. But how **changed** was the sight **Asaph** got of them when **he** went into the **sanctuary** of God! Here in **David's** psalm **he** writes of evil-doers **being cut down like grass** and withering like the **green herb**.

"**Trust** in the LORD, **and** do good;  
Dwell **in** the land, and follow **after** faithfulness.  
Delight thyself also **in** the LORD;  
**And** He shall **give** thee the **desires** of thine heart" (verses 3, 4).

**Here** was a promise to **give** to one the **desires** of his heart, a **great** promise indeed **but it** was conditioned on various things. It **depended** on (1) trusting **in** the LORD, **and** (2) doing good, (3) dwelling in the **land**, (4) following after faithfulness, **and** (5) delighting **in** the LORD. Some promises **are** without conditions on our **part**, **but** the **giving** to **saints** the desires of their heart **is** very conditional, **but** the conditions **are** not beyond their reach. If they left the land, **as** Naomi **and** her husband Elimelech **did** in leaving the land and **migrating** to Moab, **even** though it was a **time** of **famine**, they should have **been sure** that trouble would follow. So **it came**, for Elimelech died, **as** did their two sons, **after** the sons had married women of Moab, **and** the three widows were **left** (Ruth 1. 1-5). We in our day **may** fulfil the conditions **as stated by David**, so we **may** look to God to **give us** the **desires of our heart**.

"Commit thy way unto the LORD;  
Trust also **in** Him, and He shall **bring it** to pass.  
And **He** shall **make** thy righteousness to go forth **as** the light,  
**And** thy judgement **as** the noonday" (verses 5, 6).

The marginal reading of both the A. V. **and** R. V. **give**, "Roll thy **way** upon the LORD". "Thy way" I judge to **be** the course we think **as being** the way the LORD would have us to follow, and trusting Him He will **bring** it to pass. In this **way** our righteousness will go forth **as** the light and our judgement or right **as** the noonday. The way a **saint seeks** to walk should **ever be** one in which he **seeks** to please God **by doing** what **is** right, hence his righteousness will **be** seen.

*J. M.*

*{to be continued, D. V. }*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, **examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so**" (Acts 17. 11).

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## EDITORIAL

Prominent in this month's subject is the word "flesh". It occurs over 130 times in the New Testament with differing but related meanings. Its primary application is to the soft part of the body surrounding the bones (see Luke 24. 39), but it is more frequently used with extended or figurative or abstract meanings. For instance in Galatians 2. 20 the whole body is implied, in Romans 3. 20 complete persons, in 1 Corinthians 1. 29 mankind in general, in Romans 7. 5 man's corrupt nature and in Romans 1. 3 Christ's genealogical descent as to His Manhood.

An interesting occurrence is found in Hebrews 10. 20. Here it cannot be merely the physical frame of the Lord Jesus Christ which is in view, but His full Manhood. In John 1. 14 and 1 Timothy 3. 16 the word has a similar meaning. Such a change of meaning is known as synecdoche ("the extended acceptance by which when a part is named the whole it belongs to is understood"—Concise Oxford Dictionary). It will be seen that some of the instances quoted in the previous paragraph are in the same category. The study of this word is further developed in 1963—*Bible Studies*, pages 2-4. L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### INNER CONFLICT AND VICTORY BY THE SPIRIT

**From Edinburgh.** —The law is not sin, it is holy, righteous and good. The law reveals and condemns sin. There was a time in Saul's experience when he was unaware of sin. Then the commandment came, "Thou shalt not covet", sin revived, and Saul died. The sin in Paul's flesh caused wrong actions in spite of his right desire. With his mind he served the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, for the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes the believer free from the law of sin and death. God, sending His Son as a sacrifice for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. Now the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in them that live after the Spirit. So we find opposition between the flesh and the Spirit. We are in the Spirit and debtors to God's grace.

The things of the Spirit found in Romans 8 are His indwelling (verse 11), His leading (verse 14) and His witness (verse 16). We also have the firstfruits of the Spirit (verse 23), looking for the glory to be revealed to us (verse 18) and waiting for our adoption, the redemption of our body (verse 23). These are positive signs of victorious living by the Spirit.

Not only is there the wonderful future, but even now, we who have the Spirit are joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. We do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit makes intercession for us according to the will of God. The works of the flesh are manifest and manifold, but the fruit of the Spirit, orderly and lovely, is worth pondering. And so the word comes to us, "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us **also** walk".

*R. Fisher*

**From** Kingston-upon-Thames. —In Romans 7. 7-25 Paul is analysing and reporting about himself. This passage is intensely individual, yet it is also universal in its application. We see that the law is not sin; sin is in man. It is by the law that sin is unveiled. In his early life Paul became conscious of sin. From verse 15 to the end of the chapter two natures are apparent. We see the strife of the old nature and the new nature in the believer.

In this conflict of the two natures, the Holy Spirit helps our infirmity, as Romans 8 shows. Paul was victorious, and, if we allow the Holy Spirit to work fully in us we too shall be victorious. Sin in the flesh is so powerful that without the Holy Spirit's help we can do nothing. We are reminded that a little suffering is nothing compared with the glory that is to come.

Galatians 5. 16-26 tells how victory over the flesh may be achieved by walking by the Spirit. The flesh is continually warring against the Holy Spirit, trying to gain control. Though the believer is set free from the bondage of sin and the law, the flesh still remains within him as the great hindrance to keeping the commandments of the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit is borne through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The keynote **is** love.

*P. Bartlett*

From Hamilton. —Saul in early life learned of the presence of sin in himself through the commandment, "Thou shalt not covet". The commandment which was unto life he found to be unto death, for sin beguiled him and through the commandment slew him. The power of original sin in converted Paul had to be overcome by the Spirit's power (Romans 8). He could not look on the sins of the flesh without sorrow. There was a constant conflict between the two natures within him and he was caused to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" There could be no release from his distress in his lifetime. It was necessary that the Spirit should war constantly against the flesh lest the flesh become the dominating power in his life, but his hopes were set upon the day when Christ would release him from his earthly body, that this warfare might be over. In the passages which we have under review, Paul refers to the flesh as the base sinful nature within him.

Paul's desire should be ours also, that we should not walk after the flesh but after the Spirit, for he says, "if we walk by the Spirit we shall **not** fulfil the **lusts** of the **flesh**".

*Allan R. Fotheringham*

## EXTRACTS

**From Vancouver, B. C.** —Inner conflict is the first thing that a Christian encounters. Paul, in Galatians 5, has separated clearly the fruit of the Spirit and the lusts of the flesh. Many try to justify actions that Paul has included in the first list as if they were good. This is the old man seeking to gain control. In order to overcome the lusts which may control the body we must follow Paul who said, "I buffet my body".

We are told to "walk by the Spirit". We see that there can be no compromise between the Spirit and the lusts of the flesh. Nevertheless, although our goal is perfection, we are aware that we can never attain it here. A Christian, alas, can be carnally minded. Our life is an experience which determines our spiritual character as a whole. It has been said that a man's character is made by his actions.

In Romans 7. 23, 25 Paul speaks about the mind. The "law of the mind" and the "mind" serving the law of God refer to the inward man himself who has **been** redeemed. *J. Bell, Jr., J. Pope*

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —The lusts of the flesh are governed by original sin inherited from Adam, which would frustrate the law of the mind in its desire to do that which is good in accordance with the law of God. If however, we walk after the flesh, we shall die (Romans 6. 21). Note that while it is a law that sin brings death, it is also a law that faith results in life. This quickening is by the power of the Spirit. Men measure by time things which God created and regulated in eternity; in Hebrews 11. 8 it is the power of the word of God that matters, not the time. Life can be stifled by living after the flesh (Galatians 5. 21).

**From Carlisle.** —It would appear that in Romans 8. 1, 2 Paul is speaking of the deliverance from "the law of sin and of death" which he experienced at conversion. Yet this law still operates in his members, as he laments in chapter 7, and produces an ever-present state of conflict in which only the Spirit can effect victorious living. It is interesting to follow the apostle's use of the term "mind". In chapter 7 this seems clearly associated with the will, which in the believer is directed towards good, though this can only become effective and practical in the power of the Spirit. This is subsequently identified in chapter 8 with the "mind of the Spirit" and the term "the mind of the flesh" is introduced (verse 6). We take it that Romans 8. 11 refers to the same experience to which Paul refers in Philippians 3. 10, 11—the power of His resurrection—the body dead to sin and the world, yet quickened in resurrection power through the Spirit.

Mortal bodies at present quickened become a fitting sacrifice and a reasonable service (Romans 12. 1, 2); and this transformation of the whole person to God's glory is associated with the "renewing of your mind". *J. D. T., J. H.*

**From Liverpool.** —In Romans 7 is Paul's own experience. Is this the experience of one who is living a victorious life? The language does not suggest so; rather it would appear to be the language of defeat. For example, "I was alive apart from the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died" (verse 9). This we judged to be in his youth, prior to his being enlightened [1].

It is surely possible for a man even under the law, as his conscience was exercised, to delight in the law of God after the inward man, yet to become aware of the law of sin within his members bringing him into captivity (Romans 7. 23) [2].

The believer is seen in the words of Romans 8. 1, 2, where the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made him free from the law of sin and of death, though sin was still in his flesh.

*F. Frith, F. L. Jones, R. Harrison, A. H.*

**From Paisley.** —In the scriptures given for this month's subject we have two laws brought before us: the law of sin and of death, and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. These laws are in opposition to each other (Galatians 5. 17). The battleground is within believers.

When Paul grew to the age of understanding, the commandment of God was impressed upon him, and he became aware for the first time of the law of sin. Thus he stood a condemned sinner, dead in trespasses and sins. The law cannot help men, it stirs into activity the enmity which is in the fleshly mind.

Paul sees his deliverance effected and he says that there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

*D. Cooper*

**From Birmingham.** —Though the life of Paul is on the whole a story of success, he experienced the inner conflict known by the soul who puts faith in Christ. The conflict may be of long or short duration. In those who are not conscious of this experience the flesh (the old man) is victorious. The conscience has become seared and a false sense of peace is felt.

In contrast to this, if the conflict is in progress, the Spirit will have the victory if we be willing. The battle will go on. So let us strive on, being "led by the Spirit" through reading and obeying the word and by keeping in close contact with our God in prayer.

We were particularly interested in Galatians 5. 17. Thinking of lust as evil intents or evil desires, it is easy to understand how "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit", but not so easy to understand how the Spirit lusteth against the flesh [3].

*D. H. E.*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Paul in Romans 7 is answering the question. "Is the law sin?"\* He shows that sin (original sin) is in man. He states that he would never have known coveting except the law had said, "Thou shalt not covet". He states that it wrought in him all manner of coveting. Verse 9 brought a difference of opinion; some were of the opinion that the expression "For I was alive apart from the law once" meant in his childhood before he learned the law, whilst others thought that it was in later life but before he was saved [4].

Romans 7, 15 brings out the working of the flesh. We know the way of the Spirit is opposed to the way of Satan; the desire to do evil is of Satan, and the desire to do good is of the Holy Spirit. Verse 23 speaks of the warring between the law of the members and the law of the mind.

Galatians 5 stresses the continual struggle of flesh and Spirit, which can never be reconciled to one another. We see the works of the flesh which are always to be shunned, and the fruit of the Spirit which is good and desirable and can lead to what could be termed perfect peace. There is also the exhortation not only to live by the Spirit, but to walk by Him also. Here is the contrast between vainglory and the glory of God.

*Jas. Whitelaw*

**From Leicester.** —Paul recognized that there was continual conflict between the law of his mind and the law in his members. With his mind he would serve God, but because sin dwelt in his flesh he knew the effect of that rebellious nature (Galatians 5. 17). The flesh is not subject to the law of God and is prone to sin.

Paul said that he took pleasure with his mind in the law of God, thus he continually wrestled within himself to gain victory, so that he could serve God in mind and body, but was constantly opposed by the law of sin in his members.

How was Paul to become a victor over his sinful flesh? He found that victory came by the Spirit of God dwelling within him. The Spirit showed him the true meaning of the law of God, and he no longer served a set of written statutes (the letter of the law) but living commandments from God to his inward man.

Walking by the Spirit we do not succumb to the lusts of the flesh, but are able to bear fruit unto God (Galatians 5. 22, 23). Paul said that he had been crucified with Christ, and the life that he was then living was by faith in the Son of God.

He could look forward, as we can, to that day when he would no longer have to wage war with the flesh; his conflict would be over, and his body would be conformed to the body of His (Christ's) glory (Philippians 3. 21).

*I.*

*McLean,*

*G. Hydon*

**From Crowborough.** —In Romans 7. 7 Paul asks the question, "Is the law sin?" The remaining verses of the chapter answer this. There is nothing wrong with the law, but there is something wrong with us. Romans 7 in part describes a man who is born again and has the new nature and the old contending with this within. We cannot do good of ourselves, but only by the Spirit. By death we are free from the law and are joined to another, even Christ. The result of this union is to bring forth fruit unto God.

One day our salvation will be complete and we shall be delivered from the body of this death.

In Romans 8. 3, 4 two things are presented—what the Lord has done for us and what the Holy Spirit will do in us. "Walk after" implies subjection. Walking after the flesh means yielding to the dictates of the flesh. Romans 8. 5-8 makes plain where that leads to. To walk after the Spirit is to be subject to the Spirit. All that we have been trying to do being fulfilled no longer by us but for us. The law makes demands and leaves us helpless to fulfil them. Christ makes demands but he fulfils them in us. In Galatians 5. 16-24 we have a catalogue of the works of the flesh but not complete. This is in contrast to the fruit of the Spirit (not fruits, as is often misquoted). The former can only be produced by the flesh. No good ever comes from it. Good can only come from the **Spirit.**

*J. Robertson*

**From Atherton.**—The inner conflict in the believer is the result of the two natures within him, the sinful nature, prone to sin, and the divine nature, opposed to sin. Sin is weakness; and victory by the Spirit we can only know as we allow Him to have control in our lives and service.

Where was Paul in relation to these matters? Did he seek ease, comfort and luxury? Never! A survey of 2 Corinthians 11. 23-33 will help us to see that these things were nothing to him. He suffered hardship gladly (2 Corinthians 12. 10).

Again, did Paul seek popularity? Not for a single moment. From the first he sought to please God, not men. He writes, "Am I seeking to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Galatians 1. 10) and "not as pleasing men, but God who proveth our hearts" (1 Thessalonians 2. 4).

Further, did Paul work for selfish ends? Again, no! He sought the good of others—"not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10. 33). Thus in the inner conflict which we all experience, victory by the Spirit is ours as we seek to yield ourselves, not as servants to sin with its desires for self.

*D. S. Jones, G. A. J.*

**From Methil.**—In our study of this subject we saw that the operative word, so far as Romans 7 was concerned, was "sin", and that the words "sin" and "sinful" are mentioned no less than 16 times in this chapter alone. Sin here is indwelling sin in a believer, i. e., the flesh.

Paul asks the question in verse 7, "Is the law sin?", and in verses 7-25 he answers the question in a very full account of how the sin is not in the law, but in man himself. Though he repeatedly uses "I" in recounting his own experiences of the war against the flesh, the things that he brings out apply equally to all believers.

He states that, but for the law, he would have known nothing of sin (see also Romans 3. 20), and "apart from the law sin is dead" (Romans 7. 8). This did not mean that any person was sinless without the law, but rather, having received through the law the knowledge of sin, the flesh (or corrupt nature) became alive. The law said, "Thou shalt not covet", and the result was that the indwelling sin (the flesh), caused Paul to resist the commandment, and do exactly what the law said not to do. The law revealed sin to be exceedingly sinful.

As "sin" was the operative word in chapter 7, so also is "Spirit" the operative word in chapter 8. It is mentioned approximately 18 times here and a further eight times in our portion in Galatians 5.

In Romans 8 we see what the believer is in Christ Jesus, i. e., free from condemnation. The law, because of the flesh, could not do this, but God having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the  
flesh. *A. R. Smith*

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —In Romans 7 and 8 Paul is describing his personal experiences, knowing that these would be common to all those to whom he wrote, though they might not realize the powers that were at work causing this conflict within. Here is helpful teaching that has kept many a child of God from a feeling of despair as he has fought with the evil propensities within. The adversary uses all his devices to tempt believers to doubt the work of the Spirit of God within, when indeed this inner conflict is one of greatest evidences of life within. This experience is totally unknown to an unregenerate man.

Paul's conclusion is that he is a creature of fleshly desires, "sold under sin". What power then can combat this sad state? "Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord". With his mind Paul delighted in and served the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. In chapter 8 Paul shows that he is free from condemnation in Christ Jesus. He is in the happy position that he cannot be laid hold upon by the law of sin and of death, having been made free by the Spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus.

*R. Shaw*

**From Wigan.** —Sin is in the believer, but in faith he reckons himself dead to sin and the law. The struggle against the inclination to sin is not given as the way to a victorious life, but the believer is to reckon himself dead thereto and alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

The believer, appreciating the will of God as being good, acceptable and perfect, now serves, not in the oldness of the letter, but in the newness of the Spirit. In his new standing in Christ and under the power of the Holy Spirit the believer may go from victory to victory, having died to the law and being united to Christ, who was raised from the dead. There is no condemnation because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made him free from the law of sin and of death. He is now put in a new position in order that he may respond to the will of God, and the requirements of righteousness, by walking not after the flesh (the depraved and fallen nature) but after the Spirit.

Because of the indwelling Spirit the body of the believer may be quickened in order that in him, here and now, the will of God may be done. He owes everything to God and is under obligation to respond. If we live after the flesh we must die, but by knowing the quickening of the Spirit we shall live.

*J. H.*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —The conflict between life under the law and life in the Spirit is logically argued in Romans 7 and 8 so as to contrast the inevitable failure of the one and the certain victory of the other. Paul is at pains to show that the law is itself good and holy. It came from God and, being just and holy, reveals the true nature of sin and its resulting death. The more that is known of the law, the truer is the appreciation of the evil of sin. It is the sin which is in man that is the real trouble; the law is outside him and serves to condemn.

In the victorious Christian life the emphasis is continually on the work of the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that frees initially from the law of sin and it is the Spirit that makes victory possible in daily living. The Christian, therefore, has the responsibility to live and be led by the Spirit and not to follow the cravings of the corrupt nature.

Galatians 5 contrasts the two ways of life, the works of the flesh on the one hand and the fruit of the Spirit on the other. The conflict is joined until the time of the completion of our salvation. The struggle is not easy, but there is power available from God to enable the Christian to overcome sin and, by God's grace, the final issue is never in doubt; there is no condemnation.

*A. C. Bishop*

**From.** Hamilton, Ont. —The inner conflict within the believer, between the flesh and the gracious Holy Spirit who indwells him, commences immediately after the new birth. This conflict or warfare is intensely real and deadly. Peter says, "I beseech you . . . to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2. 11). It continues either until death, or until the coming of the Lord, when He will finally and fully deliver us from the body of this death. Paul's question in Romans 7. 24 is thus answered (7. 25).

As we look within we must all feel ashamed, as did the great apostle. Sin dwells within us and has power over us. Our desires and struggles to conquer sin are often unavailing. But there is the possibility of victory through the power of the Holy Spirit within, if we crucify, or put to death, the deeds of the flesh. The victorious life is conditional (Romans 8. 13); through the Holy Spirit we can manifest in our lives the beautiful fruit of the Spirit.

The mind, or the will, has a prominent part in this struggle. We must be spiritually minded, and bow our wills completely to God's will, "bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10. 5).

*T. Ramage*

## COMMENTS

[1] (Liverpool). —Romans 7. 7-25 is Paul's answer to his own question, "Is the law sin?" It cannot be sin, for it discovers sin in man and to man, "for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3. 20). Sin was in Paul, as it is in us all, before he realized its presence. When he heard the commandment of the law, "Thou shalt not covet", then the sin (original sin) which was dormant in him revived, and wrought in him all manner of coveting, "for apart from the law sin is dead". Nowhere in Scripture does to be dead mean not to exist; it means a state of existence. So sin which was in Paul, and had been from birth, came to life and activity, and through the commandment slew him. So he came to be, as Ephesians 2 says, "dead in trespasses and sins". Though Paul received a new life in Christ Jesus, as Romans 8 shows, there was still in him, that is, in his flesh, the sinful, fallen nature with which he was born. He, through regeneration, had an inward man, which implies an outward man, the old man, and it is these two with which he deals as he goes on in chapter 7. So antagonistic to all that is good is sin in the flesh, there are but two ways in which we may enjoy freedom from it, (1) by reckoning ourselves dead unto sin, and (2) by the quickening of our mortal body by the Spirit that dwells in us.

*J. M.*

[2] (**Liverpool**). —In Romans 7 Paul is not dealing with what is possible or impossible, he is dealing with the question he himself asks, "Is the law sin?" He shows that sin is in man, existing there, though dormant, from birth, and that it still exists in the flesh after conversion, when by regeneration there has come to be an inward man. There are two laws, the law of the mind of the new man and the law of sin in his members. Paul is not dealing in chapters 7 and 8 with defeatism and victory, but with facts that exist. J. M.

[3] (Birmingham). —In modern English "lust\*" (noun or verb) invariably has a bad connotation, but this has not always been the case. The Greek word translated "lusteth" in Galatians 5. 17 has the same stem as the word translated "desire" in Luke 22. 15, where it is used in a good sense. This is the sense in which it can be applied to the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5. 17, i. e. the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh. L. B.

[4] (**Whitehills and Macduff**). —This was evidently in Paul's youth. J. M.

## NOTES ON THE PSALMS

## PSALM 37

*(continued from page 36)*

"Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;  
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,  
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass"  
(verse 7).

In answering our prayers and giving us the desires of our hearts, God may have many things to do before He can do this, therefore the psalmist exhorts us to wait patiently, or be silent to the LORD, He knows them that are waiting upon Him. Isaiah says, "They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength" (Isaiah 40. 31). We are not to fret or be angry because the man who prospers does so through his wicked devices. The psalmist says,

"Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:  
Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil-doing.  
For evil-doers shall be cut off:  
But those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the land"  
(verses 8, 9).

Here the psalmist exhorts against anger and wrath; such fretting tends only to evil-doing. The life of evil-doers shall be cut short, but in contrast such as wait on the LORD shall inherit the land. The wicked are out for a larger slice of the land and material things, though it may be that they get these by scheming; they think nothing of the far stretching land of a heavenly country. Heaven seems to them too remote and unsubstantial. Those that wait on the LORD were to inherit the land of Israel, and the believer now will have his portion in a heavenly country; for that we wait.

"For **yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be:**  
**Yea,** thou shalt diligently consider **his** place, **and** he shall not be.  
**But** the **meek** shall inherit the land (A. V. earth);  
**And** shall delight themselves **in** the abundance of **peace**" (verses 10, 11).

It is **evident** from **verse 10** that the **LORD** often **grants** the wicked a short **time** and then He deals with him, for the place that he occupied once is **empty**—"he shall not be". But in contrast, the **meek**, the gentle folk, inherit the land. Would the Lord have **verse 11** in **His** mind when He said, "Blessed **are** the **meek**: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5.5)? This is the opposite of the thoughts of worldly-minded men who think, or who **seem to think and act**, as though the world or **part** of it belongs to them permanently. The gentle people, who **are** the **true** inheritors of the earth, will delight themselves **in** the **abundance** of **peace** or prosperity. Their inheritance will not **bring** them **an** abundance of trouble.

"The wicked plotteth **against** the **just**,  
**And** gnasheth upon him with his teeth.  
 For **He** seeth **that** his **day** is coming" (verses 12, 13).  
 The Lord shall laugh at him:

This is a **statement** of like kind to those of the previous **verses**; it shows the bitter hatred of the wicked against the righteous, **against** whom he gnashes his teeth **and** plots his downfall. **He** would destroy the righteous, if he could, **but** the **LORD** will laugh **at** him, He who is the **defender** of the righteous, for He **sees** the **day** coming when He will deal with the wicked **man** for his wickedness.

"The wicked have drawn out the sword, **and** have **bent** their bow;  
 To **cast** down the poor **and** **needy**,  
 To slay such **as** **be** upright in the way:  
 Their sword shall **enter** into their own heart,  
 And their bows shall **be** broken" (verses 14, 15).

These **verses** continue the doleful tale of the actions of the wicked against the righteous who are of the poor and **needy**; they have **even** drawn out the sword **and** **bent** their bow **against** them. They would slay the upright, **but** their sword shall **enter** their own heart and their bows shall **be** broken. Their wickedness shall recoil upon themselves.

"Better is a little that the righteous hath  
 Than the abundance of **many** wicked.  
 For the **arms** of the wicked shall **be** broken:  
 But the **LORD** upholdeth the righteous" (verses 16, 17).

The righteous should **remember** that they **are** sojourners **and** pilgrims on earth, **and** pilgrims should not gather together **and** **carry** too much **on** their journey to their heavenly home. Better is a little that they have than the **abundance** of **many** wicked. The ways of the wicked **and** covetous **are** clearly **set** out **by** Solomon in **Proverbs** 1. 10-14; they lurk privily for the innocent, and **are** out **to** fill their houses with spoil, **and** **seek** that others shall join them **and** they shall all have one purse. Such a course **as** Solomon outlines has gone **far** in **our** time. But the **arms** of the wicked shall **be** broken, **and** the **LORD** will uphold the righteous.

"The LORD knoweth the **days** of the **perfect**:

And their inheritance shall **be** for ever.

They shall not **be** ashamed **in** the time of evil:

And in the **days** of famine they shall **be satisfied**" (verses 18, 19).

"**Perfect**" is from the Hebrew *tamiym*, which means complete, men of integrity, upright. Their inheritance is not **bounded** by time but is for ever. **But even** during their **time** on earth they shall not be ashamed **in** evil **times**, and **in** **days** of **famine** they shall **be satisfied**. Such is the recompense for **an** upright unblemished life.

"**But** the wicked shall perish,

And the enemies of the LORD shall **be** as the excellency of the pastures:

They shall consume; **in** smoke shall **they** consume away.

The wicked borroweth, and payeth not **again**:

But the righteous dealeth graciously, and giveth" (verses 20, 21).

Some render "the excellency of the **pastures**" as "the fat of lambs", but whether it is the one thought or the other, both **speak** of lushness and fatness. The wicked and the LORD'S **enemies**, though they **be** like such, shall perish and consume away. The wicked borrow but **never repay**, but **in** contrast the righteous dealeth graciously and giveth (not lendeth). There is a **great difference** between a gift and a loan.

"For such as **be** blessed of Him shall inherit the land;

And they that **be** cursed of Him shall **be cut off**.

A man's goings are established of the LORD;

And **He** delighteth in his way.

Though he fall, he shall not **be utterly cast** down:

For the LORD upholdeth him with **His** hand" (verses 22, 23, 24).

God **blessed** Adam and **Eve** whom **He** created (Genesis 1. 28). **He** **blessed** **His** people Israel **again** and again. Blessed is the man whose **sins** are forgiven, and also who **meditates** in the law of the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD and such as are the undefiled in the way; **indeed** for **many** reasons the blessing of the LORD descended on men on the earth. **Here** such as were blessed of **Him** inherited the land. But **in** contrast those that brought the **curse** of God upon themselves because of their actions and **ways were cut off**, men who **did** not live out half their days (Psalm 55. 23). A man's (*geber*, a strong man) goings or **steps** are established of the LORD, and **He** delighteth in his way, as **He** sees him **step** out in his way. In **verse 31** we read, "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his **steps** shall slide". The two words for **steps** in those verses are not the same. In **verse 31** it is the Hebrew word *ashur*, which means going straight, and there is in the word the thought of prosperity and happiness. In **verse 23** it is the Hebrew word *mitsad*, which means a step, a going, and in it there is the thought of company or companionship (see Daniel 11. 43). The LORD delighteth in such a strong man's way, for though he fall he shall not **be** utterly cast down, for the LORD upholdeth him. "A righteous man faileth seven times, and riseth up again" (Proverbs 24. 16). "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise" (Micah 7. 8).

"I have **been** young, and now **am** old;

**Yet** have I not **seen** the righteous forsaken,

Nor his **seed** **begging** their **bread**.

All the **day** long he dealeth graciously, and **lendeth**;

And **his** **seed** is **blessed**" (verses 25, 26).

Some psalms were written by David when he was young, as for instance Psalm 27. **But** this Psalm (37) was written when David was an old man. He looks **back over** his life to the **days** of his youth; **over** many years in early life when he was sorely persecuted by Saul and greatly tried, **but** he says that he never **saw** the righteous forsaken nor the **seed** of the righteous begging their bread. **Of course** it is possible **for a child of God to be so wayward and wasteful as to bring himself and his children to poverty.** **But** here David writes of the righteous, those whose ways **are** those of practical righteousness, of right-doing. This is a **most** assuring word of the psalmist, and many have **found great comfort from** it. David says that the righteous **man** all **day** long dealeth graciously **and** lendeth, **and** that his **seed** is blessed. These two **verses (25, 26)** should be read together.

"Depart **from evil, and do good;**

And dwell **for evermore.**

For the LORD loveth **judgement,**

**And** forsaketh not His saints;

They **are** preserved **for ever:**

**But the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.**

The righteous shall inherit the land,

**And dwell therein for ever" (verses 27, 28, 29).**

The words "Depart from evil, and do good" are also found in Psalm 34. 14, and where words are repeated they are worthy of attention, as we are sure that these are. "Dwell" here I take it has the same meaning, of dwelling in the land, as in verses 3 and 29. The LORD loves judgement, righteous and wise decisions on all matters. Also He forsakes not his saints; His promise is sure, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Hebrews 13, 5). He will preserve them for ever. We have already seen in verse 11 that the meek shall inherit the land; here it is the righteous that shall inherit the land and dwell therein for ever.

"The mouth of the righteous talketh of wisdom,

And his tongue speaketh judgement.

The law of his God is in his heart;

None of his steps shall slide" (verses 30, 31).

In these two verses we have the close association between the words of the righteous and his walk. It is calamitous when the talk and the walk are divorced from one another in the life of God's saints. First, the mouth of the righteous talketh of wisdom and his tongue speaketh judgement, proper and just decisions. How is this so? The answer is that the law of his God is in his heart. Men can listen with profit to what he says. He will be able to give grace to them that hear (Ephesians 4. 29). But the law of his God not only found a place in his mouth, it reached his feet also, for we are told that none of his steps shall slide. It is sad to see a man of standing and worth amongst his fellows whose steps are sliding, and such a sliding of steps is the forerunner of a fall. Security for the saints is found in the word of God and in the God of the word (see Acts 20. 32).

*{to be continued, D. V. }*

*J.*

*M.*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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## EDITORIAL

This month's subject provokes thought upon the process by which divine truths are disclosed to men. In the past God revealed Himself to chosen individuals, who recorded the divinely inspired words of Holy writ. Then, as now, men appropriated God's word as helped by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes God spoke directly to His servants, as was the case with Moses (Leviticus 1. 1; 4. 1 etc), Jeremiah (1. 11; 4. 1 etc.), Ezekiel (1. 3; 16. 1 etc.), Hosea (1. 1) and others, as recorded in the Old Testament. In New Testament times the twelve apostles heard the word of God from the lips of the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh. John the apostle further heard the glorified Lord speak to him in the Isle of Patmos (Revelation 1. 17—3. 22). Men of both dispensations have been moved to record by divine inspiration their own visions and experiences and the history of their times. Some, apparently without any visible or audible revelation, nevertheless wrote of future events by a mysterious activity of the Holy Spirit within them (1 Peter 1. 10-12).

Although Paul mentions in his epistles some of the things that were specially revealed to him by the Lord, he does not tell us the form that these revelations took, nor are we told how the inspired words of his epistles were conveyed to him. The general tenor of his life and work seems to indicate that the revelations enabled him to speak the "pattern of sound words"\* (2 Timothy 1. 13) and that in due time, when he was led to write letters to churches and individuals, he drew upon his accumulated knowledge, including that given to him by revelation. The words of these letters came by divine inspiration and form part of the Scriptures. L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT

#### Inner Conflict **and** Victory by the Spirit

From Melbourne, Australia. —The Spirit indwells and encourages the believer to be pleasing to God and to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12. 2). The flesh, or the sinful nature, continues in the believer and is in constant conflict with the Spirit, but he can never again be brought into condemnation (Romans 8. 1). The works of the flesh are listed in Galatians 5. 19-21, so we are forewarned that the believer who allows the flesh to gain control and who practises works of the flesh, shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5. 21).

The secret of the victorious Christian life is given by Paul who learned it by personal experience: "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5. 16). The fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in our life, even as it was in Paul's, according as we walk by the Spirit.

How encouraging it is to read Romans 8 and see the help to be derived from the Holy Spirit, who leads us (verse 14), helps us (verse 26) and intercedes for us (verse 26). Thus we, like Paul, can live a victorious life, through our Lord Jesus Christ and the help of the Holy Spirit (Romans 7. 25).  
*L. F., P. W. A.*

### **An Instrument of New Testament Revelation**

**From Atherton.** - "To this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister... of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee" (Acts 26. 16). These words of the Lord, spoken on the Damascus road to Saul of Tarsus, indicate that the Lord appeared to him more than once. His rapid growth after his conversion in preaching and teaching would give evidence that the Lord revealed much to Paul from the first.

The words of Ananias are highly significant: "The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know His will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from His mouth" (Acts 22. 14). Paul was one of the apostles. This he lays claim to in his epistles. He saw the Lord and from Him he received direct revelation. His words to the Galatians are, "Neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" and "I conferred not with flesh and blood... but I went away into Arabia" (Galatians 1. 12, 16, 17). Like Moses in the desert, and like John the Baptist, Paul was in Arabia the place of revelation.

Paul's special work was to the Gentiles: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3. 8).

The apostle alone writes of the Church, the Body, and no other apostle writes of the Lord's coming to the air in a detailed way as Paul does. The Lord spoke first of "My Church" (Matthew 16. 18), and also of His coming for the saints of the Church (John 14. 3).

*C. Sankey, G. A. J.*

**From Birmingham.** —Paul was accustomed to being taught, but he emphatically states that the truth of the gospel, and the mystery of the Gentiles being included in God's blessing through Christ, were revealed to him. Paul could not have derived these truths in detail from his knowledge of the Old Testament writings.

It would seem from Acts 19. 35 that the people of Ephesus falsely considered it their heavenly privilege to be custodians of the image and of the goddess Diana. To the saints in Ephesus, therefore, Paul's words regarding their being "fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus" would be a very precious revelation.

Paul warned the Galatians of the danger of preaching another gospel. From Galatians 3. 1-3 it is evident that the crucified Saviour had been set forth to them, but they became confused with the law and its works.

The importance of the keeping of the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus is emphasized, as this is another truth which was revealed personally to the apostle.

The "Church" in Ephesians 3. 10 is the Church the Body of Christ, and we marvelled that the wisdom of God is to be made known to the heavenly principalities and powers through that Church. *R. B. Jones*

**From Liverpool.** —The Lord's purpose in Paul was revealed to Ananias (Acts 9. 15). Of the gospel which he preached, he said, "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1. 11, 12, 16, 17). The revelation Paul had on the Damascus road was but the beginning of the disclosures made to him by the Lord.

We considered how these revelations were actually made. The principle given us in John 14. 26 we judged would apply here, though we felt we could not rule out that the Lord Jesus Himself could have made the revelation to Paul directly. We thought that Arabia might well have been the place where, in seclusion, many things were revealed to Paul (Galatians 1. 17), as God gave the Law to Moses on Sinai and had dealings with Elijah in the seclusion of the wilderness.

We can appreciate in measure the Lord's choice of this man, his intellect, his zeal, his knowledge of the Scriptures, all sanctified to the service of his Lord, a chosen vessel indeed! The apostle was overwhelmed by the fact that through him by God's grace was made the revelation of the mystery of Christ, that Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel" (Ephesians 3. 4-6).

The difference between revelation and inspiration was touched on [1].

*F. Frith, AM.*

## EXTRACTS

**From Wigan.** —Paul's apostleship was not from men but from Jesus Christ, and from God the Father. He was as one born out of due time. The gospel he received direct from God he vehemently defended against those who would pervert it.

The Lord's Remembrance instituted in the upper room in the night in which the Lord was betrayed was made known to the apostle by the Lord Himself, hence Paul was able to instruct the churches how the Remembrance was to be kept (1 Corinthians 11. 23-26).

His writings to the churches were part of the inspired word of God. He was a steward of the grace of God toward the Gentiles. This mystery which had not been made known in past ages (Colossians 1. 26), was made known to Paul by revelation from the Lord. He was made a minister of the Body, according to the gift of God's grace. The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles had now been made known.

*Jas Hurst*

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —It is through Paul's writings that we have the truth of the Church the Body of Christ. It was a mystery which he understood, that Gentiles should be fellow-members of the Body (Ephesians 3. 6), and that all the members would be raised incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15. 51). The apostle also received of the Lord an account of the manner in which the Lord was to be remembered (1 Corinthians 11. 23).

The gospel which Paul preached to the Corinthians is the one which he received (1 Corinthians 15. 3). They in turn received it because the Spirit was working in their hearts to reveal it to them by faith. In presenting the gospel Paul adopted different approaches according to the people he was addressing. This revelation carried

authority and was changeless as God Himself. Paul had been chosen from the womb to reveal the Son of God and preach Him among the Gentiles. As men responded to the revelation the wisdom of God was unfolded in the Church to the principalities and powers (Ephesians 3. 10). It was the prayer of Paul that the Father would grant each saint to be strengthened with power in the inward man to apprehend the love of Christ. There was a light of revelation which stood in contrast to the pursuits of unbelievers of that day. Let us allow that power to work in us, for it can accomplish more than we ask or think.

*Eric Archibald*

**From Derby.** —One of Paul's greatest revelations was the gospel which he preached to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Galatians 2. 2 tells us Paul went up to Jerusalem by revelation and there he pointed out that circumcision was not necessary for eternal salvation and that the Jew had no priority over the heathen in connexion with the gospel.

The apostle Paul was an outstanding example to all men in the way he spoke and lived, thus revealing to them the gospel that he had received (Philippians 4. 9). *A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —Paul was endowed by God with talents which enabled him to be a prominent instrument of New Testament revelation, with emphasis on the acceptance in Christ of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. All Paul's epistles in the New Testament are God-breathed writings, but it is instructive to pick out those references in which Paul specially states that he is the bearer of a divine message and to note the associated themes.

*Reference*

*Quotation*

*Theme*

1 Corinthians  
15. 3-8

For I delivered **unto** you **first** of all **that** which also **I** received...

The **facts of the gospel.**

Galatians  
1. 6-12.  
Ephesians  
3. 1-12

... **came to me** through revelation of **Jesus Christ**, **by** revelation was **made known** unto **me** the **mystery**...

The gospel.

Gentiles fellow-heirs **to** the promises with the Jews.

1 Corinthians  
11. 23

For I **received of** the Lord that which also **I** delivered unto **you**...

The **Remembrance.**

1 Corinthians  
14. 37

**I** write unto **you**... the **commandment of** the Lord

Instructions for **conduct in churches of God.**

2 Corinthians  
13. 10

**I write** these things... according **to** the authority which the Lord **gave me.**

Discipline **in** the churches **of God.**

1 Thessalonians  
2. 13

When **ye received from us** the word **of** the **message**... **ye accepted** it... as the word of God.

Faithfulness to the Fellowship, **despite** opposition.

1 Thessalonians  
4. 15

We **say unto** you **by** the word **of** the Lord.

The Rapture **of** the Church

When so listed, it is evident that what the apostle is emphasizing in these special references constitutes what we call the fundamentals, the foundation of the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. Even if we had only these passages, we should have the essence of the Christian Faith for the present time.

*C. L. Prasher*

**From Carlisle.** —The gospel which was revealed to Paul was preached by him as a servant of Christ. It is significant that Paul should write so dogmatically about the gospel of Christ and the importance of faith. Others were introducing a different gospel which called for works as a pre-requisite to salvation.

Ephesians 3. 1-13 deals with what is additional to the gospel, as in 1 Corinthians 15. 3, 4. Paul refers to the mystery of Christ. This "mystery", which he shared with his fellow-apostles, was previously hidden but is now revealed, that in the Church which is Christ's Body Jews and Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow members. Special grace was given to Paul, and he fulfilled his God-given privilege in a spirit of humility and dignity.

**From Methil.** —Paul was greatly used in the preaching of the gospel and in correcting those who would preach a different gospel. This gospel was not of men but was directly revealed to Paul from the Lord Himself, probably in Arabia.

Another revelation was made to Paul, namely, "The Breaking of the Bread" (1 Corinthians 11. 23). This was in complete agreement with what is given in Matthew, Mark and Luke. The things written and taught by Paul were the commandment of the Lord, and therefore had to be obeyed (1 Corinthians 14. 37).

The object of Paul ministering the mystery of Christ was that the manifold wisdom of God should be shown through the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3. 10).

Another precious revelation to **Paul** was The Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4. 15).

*David B. Reid*

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Paul no doubt received some of his visions and revelations in Arabia, but he may have received some of his visions and revelations in his numerous imprisonments. He spent two full years in prison at Caesarea. God withdrew his great servant from the field of his labours when they were being abundantly blessed, and allowed him to be put in prison where certain of his epistles were written. Far from being a hindrance to the Lord's work, his imprisonment furthered the progress of the gospel (Philippians 1. 12) and was one of God's blessings to subsequent generations, for through his prison epistles, the doctrine of the Lord concerning the Church which is the Body of Christ has come to be better known.

Paul wrote a large part of the New Testament, fourteen books out of twenty seven. We believe that Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews.

*J. Peddie*

**From Edinburgh.** —The Spirit inspired Paul to teach justification by faith [2].

In the epistles the glory of Christ and God's purposes for the saints in Christ are revealed.

Through Paul's work the teaching of Christ is seen in practice in the Church and churches of God. Much that we hold today would be unknown if we had not the writings of Paul. Indeed, he received from the Lord that which also he delivered unto us, that the gospel truths should not be perverted, that the position of Gentiles should be made plain, that those who sorrowed about death should be comforted and that the churches of God should be established and conducted in a seemly manner.

Much that Paul taught he received not from men, as we do today, but he received it by direct revelation from Christ.

Paul, who thought himself to be less than the least of all saints, must have been amazed that he was chosen to reveal so many things, and that he, who would have destroyed all believers and churches, should be chosen to plant and succour so many in Asia and the other provinces.

*W. C. Taylor*

**From Vancouver, B. C.** —First we must determine what revelations Paul received. We know that the twelve apostles received much of the revelation concerning the Faith during the forty days after the resurrection through the Lord's ministry. Further light as to the Faith was received by Paul. The revelation about the acceptance of the Gentiles with the Jews, according to God's purpose, Paul proceeded to pass on to others. Much, no doubt, was revealed in his few years in Arabia. In 1 Corinthians 14. 37 Paul says that what he wrote to the Corinthians was the commandment of the Lord. The revelations he received when he was caught up to the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12. 3, 4) were connected with a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted overmuch. Finally, we may say that the truth of where the saints would meet the Lord at *His* coming (1 Thessalonians 4) was revealed to Paul. No other New Testament writer says that it will be in the air.

We must realize that all Paul said and did was not a revelation from God Himself. He said on one occasion while dealing with saints, that it was himself, not the Lord, that spoke (1 Corinthians 7. 12). Thus we can receive guidance from others of spiritual maturity [3].

What is the difference between a revelation and a mystery? One Greek commentator described revelation as the showing forth of hidden mysteries [4]. Thus there is a correlation between a mystery and a revelation, for what is revealed is no longer a mystery.

*J. Bell, J. Pope*

**From Paisley.** —**Though** a teacher of great depth, Paul expresses profundity with simplicity by illustrating truths such as the Body of Christ and the new body of the believer at Christ's return, by the examples of a human body and a grain of wheat. Directly bearing on this is of course the mystery of the rapture, which is the Christian's hope. God chose Paul to expound in detail to the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Ephesians 3. 8).

What Paul knew came directly from God. He was not taught by his fellow-apostles. He was in no way inferior in authority or knowledge to the twelve, and received no commission from them. His ministry to the Gentiles was from Christ, as was Peter's to the Jews. This does not mean that their "gospels" were at variance, for both men understood and acknowledged the other's apostleship from God. Indeed Peter bears witness to Paul's authority (2 Peter 3. 15-16), as Paul bears witness to Peter (Galatians 2. 8).

Apart from the two great mysteries of the Body and the rapture we are indebted to Paul for his masterly exposition of justification by faith and his teaching as to the figurative import of baptism. He has taught Gentiles the Lord's Remembrance and the difference between the Church the Body and the churches of God. Every facet of church teaching, decorum and government has been dealt with by "our beloved brother Paul". We are even indebted to him for the title "church of God" which we cherish so dearly.

*T. H. S.*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —The revelation to Paul that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah, opened his heart and mind to a rich new field of knowledge, and after this first direct and personal revelation came all the rest. He sought to know more, and as God's chosen vessel in this, as in other matters, he is used to document and propagate the things revealed to him. This service required an honest and open mind; this Paul obviously had. He was readily receptive of the Holy Spirit's instruction and his missionary zeal made him anxious to disseminate the new knowledge. It is not presumed that only he had revelations about the gospel, the Gentiles, the coming again and the resurrection, but he is the scribe and commentator used to inform and teach the churches of God. His letters are not personal opinions, but contain convincing records of the things God gave to him to tell to others. Almost at once his letters were law for the disciples of his day and indeed they still are "the commandment of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14. 37).

*A. B. R.*

**From Leicester.** —Before Christ came, revelation was given to those who feared God's name and called upon Him, giving them power to tell His message to the people. After His salvation plan was completed by the work of Christ Jesus, God used men again to reveal His will. Paul was one such person, the Lord choosing him as an instrument of New Testament revelation. He was well versed in the Scriptures. The fact that he was a Roman citizen could be a help in carrying out the will of God. By a communication of the knowledge of God to his spirit, Paul received a message to be delivered to the churches. We read in various places of Paul receiving from Christ teaching referring to the churches of God (Galatians 1. 12; 1 Corinthians 11. 23; 14. 37).

Paul received further revelation from God, but nobody is able to receive this today, because God has revealed everything to us in the Scriptures. They are both complete and up-to-date. However, we are able to obtain further enlightenment as to His will from God's word.

*J.*

*Shattock,*

*G. Parker*

**From Brantford, Ont.** —The first chapter of Hebrews tells us that God in Old Testament times revealed Himself through the prophets, but in New Testament times through His Son. The Lord Jesus chided the two disciples on the way to Emmaus about their failure to understand the Scriptures. He then interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The apostle Paul had a profound knowledge of Old Testament Scripture. Thus the revelation he received from the Lord, most likely during his stay in Arabia, found in him a ready response. Paul could say he was less than the least of all saints yet to him was intrusted the setting forth of the majority of the teaching for God's together people of his age. *J. K.*

**From Birkenhead.** —God reveals Himself to men through the written word which is divided into an Old and a New Testament. The complete revelation must be regarded as a perfect unity, but there are differences in the two divisions of the revelation. John 1 draws a distinction by referring to the law given by Moses, and grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

Similarly, Hebrews 1 says that God spake of old (Old Testament) through the prophets, and in these last days (New Testament) has spoken through His Son. The Son of God Himself is the chief instrument of New Testament revelation. He taught the apostles who were with Him during his earthly ministry, and they in their writings as guided by the Holy Spirit, became further instruments. The apostle Paul claims that He taught only things which had been revealed to him personally, although he was not one of those who followed the Lord as a disciple while He was on earth. Galatians 1. 11 and 1 Corinthians 14. 37 refer to his general teaching and ministry, and this he says was not from men but by revelation of Jesus Christ and was the commandment of the Lord. So confident is he concerning the gospel which he preached that he said, "Even if an angel preach another gospel, let him be anathema". The first chapter of Galatians refers to his visit to Arabia immediately after his conversion, when he probably experienced much of the revelation of which he speaks. *R. L. S.*

## COMMENTS

[1] (**Liverpool**). —Revelation of many truths was made to Paul by the Lord, both in Arabia and afterwards. Inspiration describes the God-breathed words of Scripture which he was both caused to dictate and also to write, as we have them in the fourteen epistles which he was used by God to carry to men. *J.* *M.*

[2] (**Edinburgh**). —It is Scripture that is inspired of God, that is, God-breathed, **not** Paul. *J. M.*

[3] (**Vancouver B. C.**). —Here we see the difference between revelation and inspiration. What Paul wrote was inspired (God-breathed) Scripture, in 1 Corinthians 7, but much that he wrote was his own judgement, not the commandment of the Lord. J. M.

[4] (**Vancouver**). —What this Greek commentator says is quite true. Mysteries were things hidden and then it was God's good pleasure to reveal many mysteries. The mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ, was hid in God from all ages and generations, from angels and men, until the Lord spoke first of it in Matthew 16. It was revealed to God's holy apostles and prophets (New Testament prophets) in the Spirit, but Paul is the only one who deals with this truth in his epistles, particularly those to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians and Colossians. J. M.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Questions from Edinburgh.** —(1) When did Paul receive from the Lord the revelation concerning the breaking of the bread? and would he not have heard of it from the disciples at Damascus?

(2) Would there be a church at Damascus at the time of Paul's conversion?

(3) Would he have received this and other truths of the gospel during his stay in Arabia through the reading of the Old Testament Scriptures and the prophets (Romans 16. 25, 26)?

**Answers.** —(1) We are not told when, but on being sent to preach the gospel and also to plant churches of God, bringing those who had been saved together into assembly life, the revelation as to "the breaking of the bread" must have been given, possibly in Arabia. J. M.

(2) This question was asked by Liverpool in February B. S. See page 22. J. M.

(3) Paul no doubt had much revealed to him in Arabia to fit him for his work as an apostle of the Lord. This was by direct revelation from the Lord, though undoubtedly the Old Testament Scriptures became living to him after he received such revelation, on the principle he expounds in 2 Corinthians 3. J. M.

### NOTES ON THE PSALMS

#### PSALM 37

(continued from page 48)

'The wicked watcheth the righteous,  
And seeketh to slay him.  
The LORD will not leave him in his hand,  
Nor condemn him when he is judged.  
Wait on the LORD, and keep His way,  
And He shall exalt thee to inherit the land:  
When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it" (verses 32, 33, 34).

Here again we have the **evil** behaviour of the wicked toward the righteous; David has written of this **again and again** in this psalm. These were the wicked and righteous within the nation of Israel. The **wicked** watched the righteous **and** sought to slay him, **but** the LORD would not leave him **in** his hand, nor allow him to **be** condemned when he **is** wrongly judged. The righteous would inherit the land, but the wicked would **be cut** off and the righteous would **see** it.

"I have **seen** the wicked **in** **great** power,  
**And** spreading himself like a **green tree** in its native soil.  
**But** one **passed** by, and, lo, he was not:  
**Yea**, I sought him, but he could not **be** found" (35, 36).

This **is** a sight common to this earth—the wicked **in** **great** power, **spreading** himself like a **green tree** in his native soil. But he **came** to his end and disappeared. **It** has happened with **many** such in our **time** who were **great** for a few years. They were sought and could not **be** found. Though they were not found on earth, God had His hand upon them and appointed them to the **place** that they **by** their works had prepared for themselves.

"**Mark** the **perfect** (Hebrew *tarn*, man of integrity, complete, upright) **man**, and behold the upright:  
 For the latter **end** of that **man** is **peace**" (verse 37).

Here we have a **man** to be marked in one's thoughts. Paul says, "Be ye imitators together of **me**, and **mark** them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample (**pattern**)" (Philippians 3. 17). The **perfect man** is not of course a sinless **man**, **but** he is one who **is** wholly devoted to God, an upright **man**. His latter end was **peace**, the **exact** opposite of the wicked **man**, who was like a spreading **green tree** **but** who **came** to his **end** unwanted and unknown. Such peaceful **ends** were those of Jacob and David, though they both knew throughout their lives much of trial and turbulence.

"As for transgressors, they shall **be** destroyed together:  
 The latter **end** of the wicked shall **be cut** off" (verse 38).

Here we have the **end** of transgressors which is the **exact** opposite of that of the **perfect** man. The latter end of the wicked **is cut** off. The psalmist **speaks** again and again of the wicked **being cut off**, perishing and **being** consumed.

"But the salvation of the righteous **is** of the LORD;  
**He** **is** their strong hold **in** the **time** of trouble.  
 And the LORD helpeth them, **and** rescueth them:  
 He rescueth them from the wicked, **and** saveth them,  
 Because they have **taken refuge** in him" (39, 40).

Throughout this psalm there **is** **great** encouragement **given** to the righteous, and the psalm **ends** on this cheerful note. The LORD **is** both their salvation and strong hold **in** **time** of trouble. The LORD helps them **and** rescueth them from the wicked. He **does** this **because** they have **taken refuge** in Him. Here **is** **great** encouragement to commit ourselves and all our **cares** and **anxieties** to Him. He will hear and answer the **cries** of His own. He has not **given** us so **many** exhortations **in** His word to **prayer** as He has done, without cause. Deliverance will come from Him **in** **due** time. He **never** acts **before** the **time** and **never** is too late.

## PSALM 38.

**This is a psalm of David, to bring to remembrance or make memorial.**

"O LORD, rebuke me not in Thy wrath:

Neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure" (verse 1).

**David does not object to God's rebuking and chastisement, for both are needed in His discipline and correction of His children and servants (Hebrews 12. 5-7; Proverbs 3. 11, 12).**

David pleads that **God** will not rebuke and chasten him in His wrath and hot displeasure. It is well for parents not to correct or punish their children when their tempers are aroused, **but** to wait until their anger has cooled off. Such was what David asked of the LORD.

"For Thine arrows stick fast in me,

And Thy hand presseth me sore.

There is no soundness in my flesh because Thine indignation;

Neither is there any health in my bones because of my sin" (verses 2, 3).

The LORD'S arrows had pierced the psalmist and His hand lighted upon him. There was no soundness in his flesh nor health in his bones, because of the LORD'S anger on the one hand, and because of his sin on the other. Though we are not told what his sin was, we may nevertheless have an idea of what he was referring to.

"For mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

My wounds stink and are corrupt, because of my foolishness" (verses 4, 5).

Though we are not told what his sin and iniquities were, they could well be connected with David's sin in the matter of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and of what he commanded to be done with Uriah, both of which things angered the LORD greatly. Yet such are the wonders of repentance on David's part that two of the sons of Bathsheba were chosen by God, Solomon to be the king of Israel (Matthew 1. 6), and Nathan to be the son from whom the Lord sprang, after the flesh (Luke 3. 31). David spoke of his iniquities being a burden too heavy for him; these were upon his soul, not his body, and they were the spiritually stinking wounds which were to him utterly corrupt.

"I am pained and bowed down greatly;

I go mourning all the day long.

For my loins are filled with burning;

And there is no soundness in my flesh.

I am faint and sore bruised:

I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart" (verses 7, 8).

Only David knew the fulness of the meaning of these words. He seemed a broken man. The words may describe more fully the misery he wrote of in Psalm 32. 3, 4 concerning his sins against Bathsheba and Uriah. His position as king made it necessary that he should tell of the misery that his sins brought to him, so that it would correct the thoughts of his people, and that among them there would be no spreading of like sins of which their king had been guilty.

"LORD, all **my desire** is before Thee;  
**And my groaning** is not hid **from** Thee.  
**My heart** throbbed, **my strength** faileth me:  
 As for **the light of mine eyes**, it also is **gone from me"**  
 (verses 9, 10).

David writes **that the LORD** knew of his desire, **and that** his groaning was **not hid from** Him. It is well for us also **that we are** fully aware **that God** our Father knows **that what we have done** is a grief to us, and is also a displeasure to Him. If we **come in a similar state** to Him as David did, **then we too** shall know His forgiveness. Though for sins **of a public nature**, in **God's** governmental dealings, **we may** reap afterwards, even as David **for the wrongs that he did**. David's **grief** was great. His heart **throbbed**; his **strength** failed **and the light was gone from his eyes**. Sin is ever a thing to be feared, **and** it is something to which **our flesh is ever prone**.

"My lovers and **my friends** stand aloof from my plague;  
**And my kinsmen** stand afar off.  
 They also that **seek after my life** lay snares for me;  
**And they that seek my hurt** speak mischievous things,  
 And imagine deceits all the **day long"** (verses 11, 12).

David's sin not only brought the **LORD'S** displeasure upon him, with all the grief that that entailed for him, **but** it also **affected** his lovers, **friends** and kinsmen. These **stood** aloof **from** him in this sinful plague, **and his kinsmen stood** afar off. This was a woeful happening which **affected** those who were **near** to him. **But persons** who had no liking for David thought that they could lay **snares** for him, **speak** mischievous things, **and** imagine deceits **against** him all **day long**. One who has **been in any kind of trouble** can easily **understand** this attitude of others. **You soon find out who are and who are not your friends**, **and** David **found** this out. **Job too** who had done **no wrong**, **but** had **become** the particular target of **Satan**, knew who were **and** who were not his friends. Those who had **been** his friends were **ready to condemn** him as a **sinner** who was reaping the results of **some** unknown evil in his ways.

"But **I**, as a **deaf man**, hear **not**;  
**And I am as a dumb man** that openeth **not** his mouth.  
**Yea, I am as a man** that heareth **not**,  
 And in whose mouth **are no reproofs"** (verses 13, 14).

The **saint that seeks to be in touch with God** in regard to events in his life will have little interest in what **men say about** him. If God hears **and** answers him, that is a matter of **first and of great** importance. So it was with **David**; he was **as a deaf man** who heard **not**, **and as a dumb man** that opened **not** his mouth; he neither listened to **nor spoke to man**. The **matter of first** importance was **for him to get** right with **God**.

*{to be continued, D. V. }*

*J.*

*M.*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

•Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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## EDITORIAL

The writing of a good article involves much hard work. There must be careful study followed by deep thought before anything worth placing on permanent record can be produced. To achieve a polished result three further stages are often necessary: firstly the writing down of the results of study and meditation, secondly revision and rearrangement to produce an orderly progression of thought, taking care to exclude irrelevant matter, thirdly the correction of punctuation and spelling errors, attention to accuracy of vocabulary and the making of minor adjustments to produce the best possible result.

A good deal of reflection is sometimes needed to find phrases which accurately convey the writer's thoughts. Those who wish to make progress in this important field of service should remember that there is a big difference between speaking and writing. The writer cannot by gesture or inflexion of voice impress his meaning upon the reader; he must find other means of capturing his attention. He must try to express what he has to say in a fresh and original manner with the minimum number of well chosen words. Short words are usually better than long ones. Short sentences can be very effective.

Wise as Solomon was, in writing Ecclesiastes, he "pondered", "sought out" and "set in order" his proverbs. He "sought to find out acceptable words... even words of truth" (12. 9, 10). Men like ourselves, of lesser intellect, must do the same. L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT

#### Paul the Evangelist

**From Leicester.**—Paul was concerned about the Jews who had a mistaken zeal for God, a zeal based on the law. Today, many people do not have any zeal for the things of God, instead they prefer to have their own beliefs. The more we are in tune with the Lord the more we will be concerned for the state of those around us. Paul had a fervent desire for the salvation of the people in his day.

Whatever Paul did, he did wholeheartedly. Prior to conversion his enthusiasm was concerned with the law, whereas afterwards it was concerned with the gospel, and the truth for believers. His enthusiasm may be measured by the way in which he went to Jerusalem, where many were seeking to kill him, for his wish was that they might know Christ, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth had been given. People are more willing to listen to a zealous person, and this we see in Paul as an evangelist.

Paul could not have had this zeal unless he had been fully assured of the truth of which he spoke. He had this deep belief from the moment he was saved, when he actually knew the risen Lord. He received still further revelation when he went to Arabia. We too can have deeper assurance by coming to our Lord and learning of Him. If we lack assurance we shall lack spiritual strength.

Paul preached the gospel, and many were saved through him. Our message must be both clear and concise. We should not preach the gospel in an uncertain manner, nor should we attempt to speak of things we know little about, for zeal with little knowledge is dangerous (Romans 10. 2).

*G. M. Hydon, J. R. Shattock*

**From Derby.** —Paul and Barnabas were separated unto the work of the Lord (Acts 13. 2). Paul, who was called to be an apostle, states that he was separated unto the gospel of God (Romans 1. 1). We learn that he was made a minister of the gospel, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentiles, but he attributed all to the power and grace of God, not to his own attainments (Ephesians 3. 7; Romans 15. 15, 16). All of us are given gifts which can be used by the Holy Spirit.

*G. W. Conway, A. K. Smith*

From Glasgow (Parkhead). —That we read so much about Paul's evangelical work suggests that God would have us know much about the diversity and fruitfulness seen in his activity and devotion to his calling. God described him as "a chosen vessel". Chosen for what?—to reveal His Son in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. This was part of God's New Testament purpose of visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name. Here we see the pattern into which Paul's evangelism fitted.

His concern for Israel was that their zeal would be properly directed into line with God's New Testament purposes in Christ. His concern for the Gentiles was that they might "turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God... to serve... and to wait..." Personal salvation alone was not the chief end of his ministry, but rather salvation with a view to service. His addresses as recorded in the Scriptures emphasize this point, as do his epistles. He spoke the word of the Lord to the jailor to such effect that he was ready to be baptized and also his whole house!

The sufferings Paul was prepared to endure show how dedicated he was to his work. Today we might think twice about undertaking his journeys, to say nothing of the persecution his preaching brought. Personal comfort and security were not in his mind. Asia, Rome and Spain were in his mind. May God help us towards a similar understanding of, **and** zeal for, the spread of the gospel. *J. J. P.*

## EXTRACTS

From Whitehills **and** Macduff. —The apostle Paul's qualities were second to none, and he was unswerving in his dedication to his new calling. The key to his success as an evangelist is found in 2 Timothy 2. 8, where he claims the gospel as his own. This is borne out in his life, for on one occasion when the Jews sought to kill him, immediately, undaunted, he was found preaching to his persecutors (Acts 21. 27-40).

In Romans 9. 1-3 we see that the apostle Paul had a deep, burning desire in his heart for the souls of men. This desire spurred him on to seek for new fields, where he never missed an opportunity of telling about the love of the Saviour who died for him.

When the apostle stood trial for his life he spoke with such clarity and in such a convincing tone that king Agrippa was caused to exclaim: "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian" (Acts 26. 28).

In Romans 15. 20 Paul speaks of his aim to preach the gospel only where the name of Christ was not known, and not to build on another man's foundation. This he fulfilled to the letter, undertaking many journeys to establish the Gentile churches and to minister to them and strengthen them in the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*W. S. Johnston*

**From Hamilton, Ont.** —Paul as an evangelist (one who goes forth and spreads the gospel) shows his concern for Israel in his epistle to the Romans: "Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved" (Romans 10. 1). Paul's concern leads to prayer and supplication, and when he speaks to the saints in his letter to the Galatians, he calls them his little children (Galatians 4. 19). His concern was for the souls of all mankind, and he turned to the Gentiles with the words of life.

Paul was ambitious, striving to preach the gospel where the name of Christ was unknown. Romans 15. 21 says, "They shall see, to whom no tidings of Him came, and they who have not heard shall understand".

Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the **Greek**" (Romans 1. 16).

*M. Vanderwater*

**From Carlisle.** —Alongside those aspects of Paul's evangelism to which our attention was drawn, we considered a few other characteristics of his ministry of "the power of God unto salvation".

It was fearless (2 Timothy 1. 7). The spirit of his service matched the message itself in power. Central was love: love for the Master, for his own people and for all for whom Christ died; yet disciplined in the care and wisdom of his approach on different occasions. We considered the latter in relation to Athens, Corinth and Ephesus. The method and technique may have varied, but the central message never. Paul's evangelism was flexible in a truly spiritual sense.

It was, moreover, faithful (Acts 20. 26, 27). Paul's was a follow-through message to "the whole counsel of God"; his gospel was purposeful and he held the vision of "the flock" and "the church of God". Faithful too in the unflinching consistency of his witness to all men, from whose blood he could claim to be free, in the precious assurance of a servant instant in season out of season, and rightly dividing the word of truth. His exhortation was not empty: "Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ".

*J. D. T., R. H.*

**From Glasgow** (Govan and Patrick). —The love of God which was shed abroad in the apostle's heart through the Holy Spirit was manifested in great concern for the salvation of the Jews (Romans 10. 1-3) and also for the faith of the saints at Rome (Romans 1. 9-11).

The terrible warning of Matthew 13. 19 stirs us to realize the importance of clarity, particularly in preaching the gospel. This clarity, however, does not necessarily demand a fixed pattern. Paul's speech to the Athenians, for example, made no mention of the crucifixion, and had only a fleeting reference to the fall, or sins. Instead of giving a chronological discourse and presenting the fall, the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and referring to heaven and hell, the apostle dealt with a subject which not only had stirred his righteous indignation, but was also of great interest to his audience. Similarly, at Antioch and at Jerusalem he concentrated on the resurrection. On all occasions his argument was logically unassailable, convincing the mind, and he sought to engage heart and soul by dealing with a subject of central interest.

*Martin Archibald*

**From Edinburgh.** —An example of Paul doing the work of an evangelist is found in Acts 17. His method was that of opening and alleging (Acts 17. 3). "Opening" is used in the sense of expounding and unravelling things. It is the word used of Lydia's conversion in Acts 16. 14. "Alleging" is not used in a legal sense, but simply denotes placing things side by side or setting them in order. It is the word used for spreading a meal on the table: the inference is that orderly presentation of the message is essential.

Paul knew that he had been sent to preach the gospel. See Acts 14. 15, where the words "we... bring you good tidings" are literally, "we evangelize". This gave urgency to the message. He felt his own weakness, but his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit.

When Paul was imprisoned in Rome he could speak of the progress of the gospel; he was now in bonds, but still he preached. The whole Praetorian guard heard Philipians 1. 13). The gospel penetrated Caesar's household (Philipians 4. 22). Paul's witness gave encouragement to the brethren in the assembly at Rome to speak the word of God with boldness and without fear. Women also were encouraged to labour with him in the gospel. His zeal and his example are here for us to follow.

*A. M. H.*

**From Vancouver.** —The word "evangelist" is a transliteration of the Greek, meaning "one who preaches the gospel". In Romans 10 we have an example of Paul's concern. This concern specifically embraces unsaved Jews. The two words used in Romans 10. 1 to express Paul's concern are interesting. The first word has the idea of good-will or kindly intent. There is an intimate loving attitude in this concern and there is represented a personal delight in something absent that results in a longing for it. The other word translated "supplication" basically means a personal spiritual need which drives one to pray to God.

An evangelist does not try to deceive, but to show the way to God. Paul, like a trained lawyer, realized that conciseness and precision were necessary. His whole message is summed up in "Jesus is the Son of God", but he had the versatility to change his approach, using many examples to illustrate his message.

*J. Pope, J. Bell*

**From Paisley.** —All who would do the work of an evangelist should see in their work the establishment of churches of God (1 Corinthians 3. 10, 11). So Paul testified the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20. 24), and also declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20. 27) and preached the kingdom (Acts 20. 25).

Cyprus was wrought from the east (Salamis) to the west (Paphos); the whole island was covered (Acts 13. 5. 6: see also the force of "in order", Acts 18. 23). Such breaking of new ground and the planning thereof (Romans 15. 24) were not to the exclusion of the reworking of older ground, and it is of importance to note and indeed emulate this systematic revisitation of assemblies.

Those who would be master workmen must have considerable capacity for hard work. Thus Paul preached for hours regardless of sleep (Acts 20. 7). He reasoned daily for two years (Acts 19. 9, 10). It was the work to which he had been called, and he could not cease.

He spoke words of truth and soberness (Acts 26. 25), not words of emotionalism. Though speaking of the same One, his approach varied according to the listeners. Thus he disputed with the philosophical Athenians (Acts 17). He outwitted scheming Pharisees and Sadducees (Acts 23. 6, 7) and only the blunt, unadulterated truth was suitable for the degenerates at Corinth (1 Corinthians 6. 9-11; 2. 1-5).

*Ian Penn*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —God intended Paul to be a chosen vessel, to the Gentiles and to his own people. As the Jews rejected the message, he preached to the Gentiles (Acts 13. 46). Nevertheless Paul had a deep longing that his people might know Christ; there was "great sorrow and unceasing pain" in his heart (Romans 9. 2). To the Jew he became a Jew, and the Gentiles would also accept him since his adaptability to their ways was for the purpose of winning them to Christ.

In Acts 9. 20-22 is an account of what he did a few days after being saved. He wanted others to be as himself. Paul had an unshakable belief in his message. His zeal to spread the gospel is seen in Romans 15. 18-21, where he speaks of the extent of his missionary activities. He preached from Jerusalem to Illyricum. He was determined to go to new places and evangelize people of many different nationalities. Weary journeys had to be made, often at great peril to his life. He would choose a synagogue or a place where people prayed. He would then preach in the power of the Holy Spirit. Some obeyed and others rejected the message. They rejected him also and he suffered many things for the gospel's sake.

*R. F. Robertson*

**From Birmingham.** —Perhaps we can trace the secret of Paul's power in preaching the gospel to his concern for souls: "My heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved" (Romans 10. 1).

Paul emphasizes the need for clarity in preaching, or speaking the word, giving the illustration of the pipe and the harp, demonstrating that even inanimate objects are recognized by their sounds. He himself preached not in "persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power". He presented to men the word of God.

He spoke with assurance; we trace this as going hand in hand with a growing strength (Acts 9. 22). What was the secret of his unabated zeal? It was his personal devotion to the Lord and a heart that continually burned. His devotion is shown when he declared, "I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake".

*H. S.*

From **Toronto**, Ont. —Paul was concerned that he might prove himself worthy of the gospel. He had a concern for his brethren in the flesh. What a burden the apostle bore towards his kinsmen is revealed in one brief statement, "I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake" (Romans 9. 2, 3). He continually bore that great weight of grief for them. We might ask, had he any right to wish to be "a curse from the Christ"? (Englishman's Greek N. T. ). Darby gives a helpful comment here which we quote, "He had loved them as much as Moses (Exodus 32. 32). His wish to be a curse was like that of Moses, a moment's earnest appeal, as beside himself. Although he was the apostle to the Gentiles, yet we see from Acts 28. 23-31 that even at the close of his ministry, from a Roman cell, he appealed firstly to the Jews. In his great concern for the furtherance of the truth of the gospel he became all things to all men, that he might by all means save some, and he did all things for the gospel's sake.

*N. Kernaghan*

From **Hamilton**. —In the preaching of Paul we can discern the clarity of his presentation of the gospel. In Acts 13. 16 Paul, in a synagogue on the sabbath day said, "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken". He narrated some of the history of the children of Israel, and of God's care and dealings with them. Paul, speaking in Athens to philosophers, said, "I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you". In Jerusalem, addressing Jews he spoke in the Hebrew tongue, and told of his descent and his training in the law at the feet of Gamaliel, and of his zeal for God (Acts 22. 1-3). Other sermons are to be found in Acts 14. 15-18 and Acts 20. 18-35. The preaching of Paul reveals a disciplined mind.

Paul's assurance is shown in the words, "I know Him whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1. 12). His assurance was revealed in his preaching, in his facing up to the hardships and suffering of his journeys and finally facing death, for he knew the One who said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life".

*M. C.*

From **Southport**. —Paul told the saints in Rome that the desire of his heart was for Israel, that they might know the salvation of God. On this account he made constant supplication to God. It was clear to him that God's purposes towards Israel had changed. Paul refers to this at the end of the Acts (28. 23-28). Nevertheless Paul continued to pray for them. He exhorts in the first epistle to Timothy that we should pray for all men that they may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2. 1-4).

The zeal which characterized the early days of Paul's Christian life in Damascus was with him throughout his life (2 Timothy 4. 6-8). If ever there was a man who "died to all below", surely it was Paul. There were those who considered his speech contemptible, but they could not deny its power. We see in Paul the value of a good knowledge of the word of God and a sanctified life.

*T. Rylance*

**From Methil.**—Paul's desire was to take the message to his brethren and to the Gentiles (Ephesians 2. 12). For this work he had been chosen and separated (Acts 9. 15, Romans 1. 1). Paul delivered his message in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15. 19). Paul was a praying preacher, a man filled with the Spirit, burdened with the condition of the souls of men.

If assurance on the part of the disciples was required, Paul through his preaching gave them this; he increased the more in strength, confounded the Jews and proved that Christ is the Son of God. So much so, that his former companions among the Jews took counsel to kill him. The passage of time proved his fitness: his manner of life was worthy of the gospel of Christ. He was a true herald, appointed by God, a teacher in faith and truth (1 Timothy 2. 7). His burning ambition was to preach Christ crucified and to be pure from the blood of all men (1 Corinthians 1. 23; Acts 20. 26). To do this, he became all things to all men that he might by all means save some (1 Corinthians 9. 22). He did all things for the gospel's sake. This meant for him stripes, stonings, shipwrecks, and perils innumerable (2 Corinthians 11. 25), which he endured through the power of the Holy Spirit.

*lain T. H. Hunter*

**From Atherton.**—Paul's message was clear, whether speaking to Jew or Gentile. It was always relevant, speaking the right word with definiteness and assurance. To the Thessalonians he wrote, "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance" (1 Thessalonians 1. 5).

His zeal carried him far and wide: he made it his aim not to preach where Christ was already named. He strove not to be an orator. He wrote, "My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2. 4).

The word "evangelist" is mentioned three times only in the New Testament, though the man and his work are traced almost everywhere in the Acts and the epistles. In 1 Corinthians 9. 16 Paul writes, "Necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel". We read of "Philip the evangelist" (Acts 21. 8). To Timothy Paul writes, "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4. 5). Evangelists are mentioned amongst the spiritual gifts from the ascended Lord (Ephesians 4. 11). In 1 Corinthians 12. 28 this gift is not mentioned and we were caused to wonder why.

The evangelist is not merely a gospel preacher. Many who are not evangelists can preach the gospel acceptably. The evangelist must be able to bring home to his converts the will of the Lord relating to baptism and addition to a church of God. This Paul did, though he personally did not baptize many (1 Corinthians 1. 14-17).

*R. A. Jones, G. A. J.*

**From Birkenhead.** —Paul was a master workman in heralding the message that had changed his own life. He had a deep feeling of gratitude for the reality of his own experience and a longing for the salvation of others. In his ministry he was impelled by the greatness of the message of the Cross, the gravity of his personal responsibility to his Master and the darkness in the hearts of his fellows.

One of the basic principles of the true evangelist is concern for others and an exercise to find an entrance for the message of life into their minds. Though he was a master of words and thought, Paul always considered his audience before he placed God's message before them. A study of his addresses in the Acts of the Apostles reveals the deep insight he had into the purpose of God and the plight of men. Simple language, reasoned argument and topical or current illustrations were used as occasion demanded. The Person of Christ and the Cross were always central in his preaching, and he always appealed to his hearers for a response to the message. Paul was concerned lest having preached to others he himself should be rejected (1 Corinthians 9. 27). Nevertheless with certainty and boldness he met friends and enemies, individuals and crowds with the challenge of the Cross. In his zeal to gain an ear for his message, he would take note of local customs and conditions, but he never lost sight of the need for conviction of sin, repentance and faith.

*A. Hyland*

### **An Instrument of New Testament Revelation**

**From Hamilton, Ont.** —Paul's writings were an important part of his work for the Lord. In the purpose of God Paul wrote some of his epistles in prison. Thus a permanent record of God's will was made. The early disciples probably felt that they lost much when such a powerful man of God was in prison. Time has shown that their loss was our gain.

Paul shared with all writers of Scripture the experience of being under the control of the Spirit as he wrote (2 Timothy 3. 16: 2 Peter 1. 21). He possessed great natural ability in logical thought and clarity of expression, which the Spirit of God used. As he wrote, the Spirit controlled him to the extent that every "jot and tittle" of the original was significant and can properly be described as the word of God. Paul drew attention to his own judgement (1 Corinthians 7. 25) indicating that he was conscious of the difference between the commandment of the Lord and his own judgement. Some other writers of Scripture (e. g., Luke and James) do not mention that they were conscious of the control of God although they wrote the inspired words of God.

The authority of Scripture is not based on the personal devotion of the writers; but by such men God gave His inspired word. Paul states that it was God's purpose to reveal His Son in him (Galatians 1. 15, 16). That which was revealed to Paul was also revealed in him (and in his writings). We therefore accept Paul's epistles as having the authority of the word of God.

*CM., M. S.*

**From Melbourne, Australia.** —The apostle Paul was a chosen vessel to receive divine revelation and to impart it to Jew and Gentile (Acts 9. 15). His training as a Pharisee and his understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures fitted him in part for the special task for which he was chosen. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Saul on the way to Damascus, and the revelation was such that he lost all his Pharisaic zeal for the traditions of the fathers, and devoted the rest of his life to serving the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9. 6).

Following upon his conversion he went into Arabia (Galatians 1. 17), and there he no doubt received the further divine revelations of which he writes.

To Paul was revealed the truth of Jew and Gentile united in the Church the Body. It was suggested that it was this teaching to which many of the Jews objected, thus causing the difficulties referred to in the epistle to the Galatians (2. 11-19). In 1 Corinthians 11. 23 Paul attests that his understanding of the Remembrance was the result of a direct revelation from the Lord. His description of the Breaking of Bread is an accurate account of the combined writings of Matthew, Mark and Luke on the institution of the Remembrance. Paul states that his writings are the commandment of the Lord (1 Corinthians 14. 37). Peter also refers to Paul's writings and includes them in the term "Scriptures", showing that he, Peter, accepted them as inspired. In spite of his revelations, Paul was humble. He calls himself "the least of all the apostles" (1 Corinthians 15. 9) and admits the necessity of the thorn in the flesh, that he should not be exalted overmuch (2 Corinthians 12. 7). P. W. A.

## NOTES ON THE PSALMS

## PSALM 38.

*(continued from page 60)*

"For in Thee, O LORD, do I hope:  
Thou wilt answer, O Lord my God.  
For I said, Lest they rejoice over me:  
When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me"  
(verses 15, 16).

Despite his sin, the LORD was David's hope, and he waited on His answer, which would dispel his sorrow and change and brighten his life. If the LORD'S answer came, then there would be no rejoicing over him by men, nor any magnifying of themselves against him. Men that are in God's favour and fear Him need fear no man.

"For I am ready to halt,  
And my sorrow is continually before me.  
For I will declare mine iniquity;  
I will be sorry for my sin" (verses 17, 18).

Sin has ever the effect of bringing us to a standstill, to a halt. Sin causes pain of heart or sorrow. But it is well when we reach the point that David reached when he said, "I will declare (or confess) mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin". John the apostle says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9).

"But mine enemies are lively, and are strong:  
**And** they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.  
 They also that render evil for good  
 Are adversaries unto me, because I follow the thing that is good"  
 (verses 19, 20).

Here David refers to his enemies again, and says that they are lively and strong, and they were increased in number. The saint has his difficulty from the flesh. David's sin sprang from this source too. In consequence of this he had great trouble. The path that saints have to tread in this world is one of great difficulty, as all who have sought to please God have found. There will always be those that render evil for good; there will always be those who are adversaries.

"Forsake me not, O LORD:  
 O my God, be not far from me.  
 Make haste to help me,  
 O Lord my Salvation" (verses 21, 22).

David closes this psalm pleading with the LORD not to forsake him, not to be far from him, but to hasten to his help, and he calls the LORD "my Salvation". Moses and Israel sang by the Red sea, "The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation" (Exodus 15. 2). David sang, "The LORD is my light and my salvation" (Psalm 27. 1). And again in Psalm **118**. 14, "The LORD is my strength and song; and He is become my salvation". When the Lord entered the house of Zacchaeus He said, "Today is salvation come to this house" (Luke 19. 9). When a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus he receives salvation, which is the Lord Himself.

### PSALM 39

This psalm of David was for Jeduthun, as were Psalms **62** and **77**. Jeduthun was one of the chief singers. These were Heman (of Kohath), Asaph (of Gershom) and Jeduthun or Ethan (of Merari) (**1** Chronicles **6**. 31-48). Heman and Jeduthun were before the Tabernacle of the LORD in the high place at Gibeon, and Asaph was before the tent that David pitched for the Ark of the covenant in Zion (**1** Chronicles 16. 37-43).

"I said, I will take heed to my ways,  
 That I sin not with my tongue:  
 I will keep my mouth with a bridle,  
 While the wicked is before me.  
 I was dumb with silence, I held my peace, even from good;  
 And my sorrow was stirred" (verses 1, 2).

It is a wise course, as in verse 1, but one may go too far in silence, as in verse 2. The believer will be wise to be careful as to the use of his tongue in every circumstance of life, but particularly when he is in the presence of the wicked, and to put a muzzle on his mouth lest he should say anything that is improper. What a man does and what he says reveal his thoughts and his character. But it is unwise to hold one's peace even from good. Hence it was that in his silence the

psalmist's sorrow was stirred. To hold back **from** saying what **one** ought to say in certain circumstances, either **to** rebuke **the wicked for** their evil **words or** ways, or to say something which **is** proper as a **witness** for the **Lord**, is sure to stir up **sorrow in one's** heart.

"My heart was hot within me;  
While I was musing the fire kindled:  
Then spake I with my tongue:  
LORD, make me to know mine end,  
And the measure of my days, what it is;  
Let me know how frail I am" (verses 3, 4).

It is a state to be sorry about to be lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. But if the holy fire is kindled within by the Divine Spirit, then we should speak as we are inwardly moved to speak. Testimony cannot be better borne than to speak of oneself in relation to the Lord. Think of how Paul time and again recounted his conversion in the Acts, and what profound effect it had, particularly when he recounted his experience to king Agrippa and Festus and the rest. The psalmist's words were about himself. He wished to know his end, a very important matter indeed, and he wished to know the measure of his days, and how frail he was. These are matters which all men should think about, and which sometimes in the rush and bustle of life they do think of, and they can be profited if one who has got the end of his life settled and the future life secured is present at such times to speak of these important things. Most want to live as though they were going to live here for ever; their frailty and the brevity of life are pushed often beyond the horizon of their thought, though life's cord may snap for them at any moment. What folly!

"Behold, Thou hast made my days as handbreadths;  
And mine age is as nothing before Thee:  
Surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity" [Selah  
(verse 5).

Here is the shortness of man's days—as handbreadths, and here too is the brevity of man's age before the eternal God; his age is as nothing. Here too is man at his best estate; he is altogether vanity. Why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

"All flesh is as grass,  
And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.  
The grass withereth, and the flower faileth:  
But the word of the Lord abideth for ever.  
And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto  
you" (1 Peter 1. 24, 25).

Time is as nothing compared with eternity, and man's time is as a shadow. "What is your life? For ye are a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4. 14).

"Surely every man walketh in a vain shew:  
Surely they are disquieted in vain:  
He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them"  
(verse 6).

Every man walketh in a vain show (Hebrew *TSELEM*, a shadow or resemblance), something that is unsubstantial, such as a shadow or phantom. One rendering of the words that follow is, "Surely they are

disquieted for vanity". What **is** this **disquieting**? It seems to be the **matter** of **heading up** riches, **yet they** know not who shall **gather** them. Solomon **wrote** of this when he said, "I hated all **my** labour wherein **I** laboured **under** the **sun**: **seeing** that **I must** leave **it** unto the **man** that shall **be after** me. And who knoweth whether he shall **be a wise man** or **a fool**?" (Ecclesiastes 2. 18, 19). Some sell their soul **in** the **amassing** of their wealth, **and** where shall **it** go to when they **are** gone? **We speak** not here of the slice that the powers that **be may** take.

"**And** now, Lord, what wait **I** for?"

**My** hope is in Thee.

Deliver **me** from all **my** transgressions:

**Make me** not the reproach of the foolish" (verses 7, 8).

Having **just** spoken of the **vanity** of the turmoil of **men**, **David asks** what he waited for from Him **in** whom his hope was, **and** he answers his own question. He **says**, "Deliver **me** from all **my** transgressions". How proper **is** such a **request**, both from his heart **and** from ours also, for what **is** within (as to **desire**) and about **us is ever a cause of unrest and** sorrow. Alas, transgression **makes** the believer the reproach of the foolish. The unbeliever has a high **estimate** of what a believer should **be** and do, **but** should the unbeliever become a believer he would **find** how difficult **it is** to **attain** to the **standard** he once **set** for others.

"I was **dumb**, **I** opened not **my** mouth;

Because Thou **didst** it.

Remove Thy stroke away from **me**:

**I am** consumed **by** the blow of Thine hand.

When Thou with **rebukes** dost correct **man** for **iniquity**,

Thou **makest** his **beauty** to consume away like a moth:

Surely **every man is vanity**"

[Selah

(verses 9, 10, 11).

The dealings of God with us, **as** with the psalmist, sometimes **bring on a** dumbness, **but** the psalmist **asks** God to remove His stroke from him, whatever that stroke or blow of His hand was we **are** not told. He was **speaking** to God **and** both knew what the stroke was. Rebukes **are acts** of chastisement or correction, **and** when God **rebukes man** for his **iniquity**, **He makes** his **beauty** (*CHAM AD*, something to delight **in**, in the Song of Songs the word **is** found **in**, "I sat down **under** His shadow with great delight": 2. 3) to consume away like the beautiful, but short-lived, moth. Surely **man is vanity** (transitory, or "a breath" R. V. Margin).

*{to be continued, D. V. }*

*J.*

*M.*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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## EDITORIAL

Atheists and liberal theologians imagine that the exercise of faith implies the renunciation of reason. In reality, human reasoning can be used far more effectively by the true Christian than by the unbeliever, because, if sanctified, it will be directed in the right course. An enormous amount of time and energy has been wasted by scholars in trying unsuccessfully to show that there are mistakes in the Bible. The believer does not need to consider such things; he can devote his whole attention to the meaning and interpretation of Scripture in the knowledge that it is God's infallible word. Although it is God's purpose that His revelation to man should be received by faith, He requires that it should be subjected to detailed, reasoning examination in order to ascertain divine truth with accuracy (Acts 17. 11). The history of true Biblical scholarship testifies that the study of the Scriptures demands the unremitting application of man's highest mental powers.

Spiritual understanding is given to the Christian (1 John 5. 20; Luke 24. 45) and he is expected to use his mind to the limit of its capacity (1 Corinthians 14. 20; Matthew 22. 37). But it is sadly true that there are some who, faced with life's problems, rely more upon their feelings and prejudices than upon a reasoned assessment of the situation in the light of what Scripture teaches. They depend upon their intuition, mistakenly ascribing its leading to the Holy Spirit's guidance, forgetting that He instructs only in conformity with God's unchanging word.

L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT

#### Paul the Teacher

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Paul the apostle had many gifts both natural and spiritual, the former being sanctified by the latter. These gifts were not left dormant, but, in the power of the Spirit of God, were used to bring to us the many gems in the Pauline epistles.

As a teacher Paul was outstanding. All his instructions to those in churches of God are given in a clear manner, though Peter could say that he wrote things hard to be understood (2 Peter 3. 16). Paul could encourage the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Corinthians 11. 1). Such a walk implies an abandonment of self, and devotedness to the Lord.

The Corinthians doubted the truth of the resurrected body. "How are the dead raised?" is a question many still may ask (1 Corinthians 15. 35). A parallel is given by Paul to seed sown in the earth. The seed is sown, death to the seed ensues, a quickening follows, and a

plant is produced. That which **rises from** the earth is **not** the **seed** sown **but** the outgrowth of what was **sown**, something **more** complex and beautiful. **So** also is the resurrection of the **body**; it is sown in dishonour, it will **be** raised in glory (1 Corinthians **IS.** 43). **In** resurrection we shall **bear** the image of the heavenly, **and**, though like the **Lord Jesus**, there will **be** differences which will **ensure** the recognition of the individual. **As** **one** star differeth from another **star** in glory, a similar difference will **be** known in the resurrection.

An illustration is given in 1 Corinthians **9. 24, 25** regarding reward, where Paul **draws** a comparison **between** the Christian life **and** an organized race. Temperance is **one** essential in relation to the athlete. He allows himself only what **is** beneficial to a prime condition **for** the contest. Paul writes to Timothy of the athlete contending in the **games** that the rules **must** be observed. This is also **so** in the Christian race. **Reference** is also **made** to soldiers in active service (2 Timothy **2. 4, 5**). **No** soldier **on** service entangleth himself **in** the affairs of this life.

J. C. Watt

**From Carlisle.** —Paul showed **great concern** that his **converts** should **be** taught the word of God. In Ephesus he **reasoned** and persuaded **in** the **synagogue** **as** to the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts **19. 8**).

Paul's approach **and** presentation of truth bore striking resemblance to the Lord's own teaching. His **use** of **sound** logic, both **written** and oral, his **frequent** use of illustration **and** his lucid application of Old Testament Scriptures **bear** the hallmark of **one** taught by the Divine Teacher Himself.

1 Corinthians **IS** is an outstanding example: his **reasoning** on **resurrection** is **supported** by an **everyday** illustration of a bare grain **and** is applied with **great** skill. **In** addition to his **use** of material things to **enforce** his arguments, Paul also **refers** to the **games**, to **impress** upon the **saints** in Corinth that they **too** had a **race** to run and a prize to win.

We thought of Paul returning to **Lystra** where he had **been stoned** (Acts **14. 21, 22**), so that he could **confirm** the souls of the disciples. This would **suggest** repetitive teaching **and** would **encourage** **steadfastness** and faithfulness, especially **in** times of trial.

Undoubtedly, Paul's teaching was with authority, **not** **personal** opinions, **but** the **word** of the **Lord** (Acts **16. 32**). R. Hyland

**From Vancouver, B. C.** —It is **necessary** that a teacher should be able to deal with the simple **and** the **profound**, according to his hearers\* capabilities. **In** 1 Corinthians **9. 24-27** we see a lucid illustration which **even** a small child may understand. **No** doubt the **comparison** and **contrast** between a race in the **Grecian** games and the Christian race would **present** the right picture to Paul's hearers **and** they would learn **quickly**. Paul has a marvellous ability **in** the **use** of such Spirit-given illustrations throughout his writings.

Not only could he give simple examples but he was able to present a lucid argument to teach profound truths. The argument of 1 Corinthians 15 follows the rules of logic. Paul states a general premise as to a question concerning the resurrection. He moves from there to the particular examples and having presented his points, he then once again states his general premise with finality. He not only knew the Greek language, **but** knew how to use it, by the Spirit's help of course.

Repetition is a prime necessity in teaching, and Paul, as a good teacher, realized this although it may seem like unnecessary repetition to those who have learned a truth.

J. Bell, J. Pope

### EXTRACTS

**From Methil.** —Paul tells us of his sitting at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22. 3). His knowledge of the facts of Scripture would be helpful, **but more** important was his appointment by God to be a teacher (1 Timothy, 2. 7). His training commenced during his stay in Arabia (Galatians 1. 17), and continued throughout his life, being built up by revelation, **and** from the Scriptures.

Paul's work lay principally among the Gentiles. He taught by example, and publicly, also from house to house (Acts 20. 20).

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul likens the life of the Christian both to a race **and** to a fight for which there is a prize, "The prize of the high calling of God" (Philippians 3. 14). He tells how that he did not run in uncertainty.

Through his reading of the Old Testament writings, Paul was able to use diversity of quotation. In the epistle to the Romans he frequently quotes the words of the psalmist David, while in Corinthians he uses the words of Isaiah the prophet.

A. R. Smith

**From Birmingham.** —Paul used natural illustrations as our Lord did in teaching spiritual truth. Paul also reasoned in the synagogues.

In Ephesians 4 we are told that His teaching (and ours should be also) was for "the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of the ministering, unto the building up of the Body of Christ".

In Ephesians 4. 8 Paul quotes Psalm 68. 18, though the wording is not exactly as in the psalm. Paul interprets Scripture for the edification of the saints, explaining in his own words as helped by the Spirit.

Galatians 4. 22-27 is an example of Paul's use of an Old Testament allegory to expound teaching concerning the Old and New Covenants.

D. P. Brown

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Paul was a scholar in the school of Gamaliel (Acts 22. 3). Paul by reason and argument taught the disciples. We see in 1 Corinthians 15 that some were astray as to the fact of resurrection, and he showed that the resurrection of Christ and that of saved ones are inseparably linked.

Illustrations are aids to understanding and make the subject clearer. Some of Paul's illustrations are in connexion with physical effort. He was a man of boundless energy as the Lord gave him strength.

Being in youth a zealous student Paul absorbed the teachings of the Old Testament writings and this was a great advantage in his apostolic days. In almost every epistle Old Testament citations are used. Paul by the Spirit counted essential the witness of the Scriptures.

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —God appointed Paul to be "a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" (2 Timothy 1. 11). He is the greatest of all teachers of the truth proper to this dispensation.

The Bereans carefully searched the Scriptures whether the things the apostle taught were really true (Acts 17). "Many of them therefore believed" (verse 12), such was the authority and exactness in his teaching.

At Ephesus for three months Paul reasoned and persuaded in the synagogue the things "concerning the kingdom of God". When some spoke evil of the Way, he separated the disciples and reasoned daily for a further two years with them in the school of Tyrannus.

Paul could speak with tongues more than others (1 Corinthians 14. 18), but he deemed it more profitable to speak briefly and simply, that the saints might be able fully to understand his teaching.

Mark McKaig

**From Hamilton.** —We observed that Paul had the vital qualifications of a teacher. We noted the masterly way in which he introduced the argument of 1 Corinthians 15. 35-49 by a two-pronged question, thus gaining the interest of the saints. Then follow his colourful illustrations, which are universal and clear in their application. Paul's illustrations are always apt, appealing in their vividness, simple in their meaning, and sparingly used. (Spurgeon said they should be like windows in a house, placed to let the light in but not so numerous that the structure is weakened. ) Verse 42 sees the bridge crossed, leading from the illustration to the parallel revelation. No wonder that at the burial of believers the supreme statement (verses 42-45), contrasting divine power with human frailty, is frequently quoted.

W. L. McLellan

**From Melbourne, Australia.** —We saw the skilful way in which Paul set forth what he was teaching. In the epistle to the Romans, chapter after chapter builds up a mass of indisputable evidence as to the Old Testament Scriptures pointing forward to Christ and foreseeing that the Gentiles would be brought into blessing through Him. He set forth the allegory of the bondwoman and the freewoman (Galatians 4. 22-31). We considered several of his illustrations in such passages as 1 Corinthians 15- the "grain", the "race" of 1 Corinthians 9; the "good soldier" of 2 Timothy 2, the "husbandman", etc. The effectiveness of his teaching depended on his detailed analysis of things and his ability to use illustrations of things natural, applying them to the scriptural teaching.

T. L. F., P. W. A.

**From Derby.** —Paul's former learning of the facts of the Old Testament Scriptures was of great assistance to him. The book of Hebrews gives us many Old Testament examples, which are used to illustrate the new teaching in this day of grace. He used everyday things to illustrate the truths he sought to convey, as seen in 1 Corinthians 15. 35-49, where he explained the resurrection of the dead.

G. W. Conway, A. K. Smith

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —For bringing God's salvation to as many men as possible, Paul was prepared to become all things to all men. In his teachings, and in the daily practice of his teaching, he did not diverge for any reason from the doctrine entrusted to him to expound. He who sat at the feet of Gamaliel was well fitted, through divine revelation, for teaching others that knowledge which does not puff up, but edifies. Note that his instruction is always addressed to those who are capable of receiving it, namely, the saints; we remember how the Lord enjoined his disciples to teach His commandments to those who were prepared to follow Him (Matthew 28, 19, 20).

Reasoning and teaching were employed by Paul in dealing with those who were unbaptized (Acts 18. 19). Teaching is eminently associated with the kingdom of God.  
Martin Archibald

**From Atherton.** —The teacher must be able to impart his knowledge to others. Paul's epistles are a lasting reminder of his ability under God to expound the truths of God, for he did not confine his teaching to oral ministry: he taught publicly, and from house to house, and also by his epistles.

One Corinthians 15. 13-20 is an example of the well-known "reductio ad absurdum" method of argument. Starting from the initial negative premise, "If there is no resurrection of the dead", Paul deduces several logical conclusions, such as "neither hath Christ been raised", "We are of all men most pitiable", etc. The absurdity of his conclusions logically establishes the falsehood of the initial premise. The epistle to the Romans also includes extensive argument and reasoning. Paul reasons freely, yet surely would have admitted that often in spiritual considerations "reason fails with all her powers". Some have decried reason beyond proper limits, for without reason we could never understand any of God's will for us. Others have exalted reason above all other attributes, and many have thereby lost their own souls.

The good teacher is a living example of his own teaching. In this Paul excelled (Acts 20. 35). He taught contentment and was content. He taught the value of suffering. He urged the disciples on in service and was himself poured out as a drink-offering. As a teacher Paul was patient. Night and day he strove with tears to win the hearts.

Paul held a balance in his teaching, both doctrinal and practical lessons being continually pressed home. He knew at which speed to teach, that his hearers be not left behind, hence the long years he often spent to educate idolators to advanced standards in church fellowship and Christian living. He knew when to be angry and when to encourage.

Paul was also a humble teacher (Acts 20. 19). This is essential in spiritual instruction. He recognized his own limitations.

Paul also achieved much success as a teacher by reason of his great and evident love for the saints. His epistles are full of his great interest in the welfare of the saints (Romans 10. 1; 2 Corinthians 12. 14, 15; 11. 28).

Lastly, Paul the teacher was devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 12. 9, 10). Without this all his work would have been valueless (1 Corinthians 13. 1-3). Paul never attracted men to himself. He recognized the tremendous danger of this and he warned the saints accordingly (1 Corinthians 1. 10-13; 3. 3-9). His duty was to teach the word of the Lord on the authority of the Lord and to the glory of the Lord, and this he strove to do.

D. S. Jones

**From Toronto, Ont.** —Paul uses close reasoning by the question and answer method (e. g., Romans 3. 1-9). "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what is the profit of circumcision?"

Paul speaks to the Corinthian people of things that they were familiar with, such as seed, fish and stars (1 Corinthians 15), to illustrate the resurrection of those in Christ. Paul presents much variety in this chapter, from things as simple as seeds to things celestial, to the glory of the sun, the moon and the stars. As though to climax his reasoning Paul then deals with the giving of life by the One who is the "life-giving Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15. 45). "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive".

Concerning verse 46 "that which is natural; then that which is spiritual", we see Jacob in the Old Testament, the natural man, becoming Israel, the spiritual. We know that the entrance of God's word makes a natural man become a spiritual man, a new creation (creature) in Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 17).

Paul often speaks of "the race" and we see in his own life a fulfilling of these scriptures. He said that he had buffeted his body, just as an athlete would. He speaks of continuing in the race for the prize that is set before us (Philippians 3. 14).

L. Gillespie

**From Southport.** —As a teacher Paul was enabled by the Spirit of God to convey to those who were reached by the gospel the purpose and will of God as to their walk and calling, and to encourage them in the Way. Paul's objective was to teach men how to behave. He uses the illustration of the race to show the need to lay aside burdens which hinder disciples in their spiritual life so as to be free to run well and so make spiritual progress. He could write in another place, "Put on the whole armour of God" (Ephesians 6. 11), using each item to illustrate a facet of the Christian's warfare.

E. J. Hodson

**From Paisley.** —The apostle Paul was told by Ananias that he had been appointed by God "to know His will, and to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from His mouth" (Acts 22. 14). In Galatians 1. 11-12 Paul states the source from which he received his gospel. He was at pains to stress that he was a teacher sent from God and with His authority.

No doubt the apostle was a powerful speaker, nevertheless he spoke in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1. 5). His speaking was not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, but in fear and trembling (1 Corinthians 2. 1-3). Paul was not only a teacher, he was also a living example of what he taught, so much so that he could exhort men to become imitators of himself (1 Corinthians 4. 16).

Paul carefully developed his arguments. An example of this is seen in 1 Corinthians 15. 12-19 where he defends the teaching of the resurrection of the dead. He showed that if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not risen from the dead then his preaching was in vain and their faith was vain. He states with conviction, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead".

L. de-Ville

**From Edinburgh.** —All human teachers must first be learners. Our Supreme Teacher is the Holy Spirit. A teacher must be fully conversant with his subject, and also be able to present it in a way which interests his hearers. Paul taught in the synagogues, in the houses, and publicly (Acts 20. 20). Note the use of comparison and contrast in 1 Corinthians 15.

Note his concern in teaching Timothy that he might teach others. Paul uses more than 30 quotations from the Old Testament in the epistles.

Our church teaching today is principally from Paul's writings. He had his example in the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 11. 1; John 3. 2; Matthew 22. 16).

D. B. Renfrew

**From Leicester.** —Paul, when faced with questions contradictory to the basic truth of God's New Covenant, replied with connected and carefully thought out argument; this is shown in his teaching concerning the raising of the dead (1 Corinthians 15. 35-49). Paul was firmly convinced of the truth of all that he said. Much prayerful thought, an intimate knowledge of Old Testament writings, Christ's teaching and his own personal experiences were brought into action against the ones who denied the power of God in resurrection.

Paul used simple topical illustrations to explain profound matters. In the times of the apostles most people were familiar with the Grecian games, and so a race and an athlete's training are used to illustrate both that which a Christian should seek to obtain and the need for temperance and subjection.

Paul had received an excellent training in the Scriptures and his knowledge of the Old Testament was extensive. This was necessary for him to have achieved his former position in the sect of the Pharisees. After his conversion Paul made use of his knowledge to good effect both in preaching (Acts 18. 28) and in teaching (Galatians 3). We note that Paul, the teacher, in closely reasoned argument makes a very careful choice of phrase, using the type of illustration employed by the Master Teacher, Christ.

G. Hydon, F. D. Parker

**From Kingston-upon-Thames.** —A teacher is one who imparts knowledge to others. He must therefore have knowledge himself, but all who have knowledge are not apt at teaching, so that teaching is a gift.

1 Corinthians 15. 35-49 gives a good illustration of teaching by reasoned argument. Reasoning involves looking at and weighing up both sides of a question to find the correct answer.

Paul was a genius, but he was not dogmatic. In his letter to Philemon we see how humble he was in his approach, tactfully teaching Philemon. But when fighting over an issue such as circumcision he was firm as he knew both sides of the subject (Galatians 2. 11-14).

J. G. Mobey

### Paul the Evangelist

**From Melbourne, Australia.** —The apostle Paul was constrained by the love of Christ to preach the gospel to others. He had a vision of perishing men, and with all his talents he brought the message to all. A true evangelist must have a desire for the souls of men, realizing the position of those who are out of Christ.

Paul said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9. 16). He saw himself as an ambassador. "We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ, as though God were intreating by us" (2 Corinthians 5. 20). His message to Jew and Gentile was clear—"We preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1. 23). "For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2. 17).

The result of his conversion on the road to Damascus was that the Old Testament Scriptures were opened up to him. He had a great understanding of them before, but now he saw them in a new light and his assurance is manifest—"And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9. 20). He was able to say at a later stage in his life, "I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15. 19).

T. L. F., P. W. A.

## NOTES ON THE PSALMS

### PSALM 39

*(continued from page 72)*

"Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry;  
Hold not Thy peace at my tears:  
For I am a stranger with Thee,  
A sojourner, as all my fathers were.  
O spare me, that I may recover strength,  
Before I go hence, and be no more" (verses 12, 13).

David's closing words in this psalm are words of strong pleading. He asks the LORD to hear his cry, and not be silent to his tears. In Leviticus 25. 23, God said to His people, "The land is Mine: for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me". For man to have any other view that this, and especially His saints, is entirely a false conception of what man is on earth. This earth was never intended to be man's permanent abode. How brief is human life, 70 to 80 years and much less for the vast majority! It is a scene also of sin and sighing, of trouble and tears. David, who has written in this psalm of God's correction because of sin, asks now to be spared, that he may recover

strength (*BALAG*, to be bright, to shine forth, to be cheerful, "brighten up" R. V. Margin) before he went hence and was no more. He had a glorious end to his life, as is described to us in 1 Chronicles 28, 29, when the princes of Israel were gathered together, and he handed over to Solomon the king the pattern of the house of God and all that he had gathered together for the building of the house. He spoke some wonderful and noble words, "And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour". May our end be bright as we face the dawning of the eternal day!

### PSALM 40

This is one of the psalms well known to God's saints, both because of David's experience therein, particularly as described in verses 1 to 5, and more especially because of the quotation of verses 6 to 8 in Hebrews 10. 5-7, concerning the Lord as the Antitype of the Levitical sacrifices.

"I waited patiently for the LORD;

And He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay;

And He set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings"  
(verses 1, 2).

These words with those that follow have been often quoted by those who have found great joy in their conversion, in knowing the difference between what they now are and what they were in the past, especially by those whose past life was one of great sinfulness. That life to them was viewed as a horrible pit, a pit of noise and tumult, as compared with their present peace. Their feet (bespeaking their mode of life and walk) were brought by God out of the miry, sticky clay of sin, and were set upon a rock (Christ Jesus), and their goings (ASHUR, to go straight, see note on Psalm 37. 23, on steps), or steps, were established. That may be a useful application of the words of this psalm to them, but it is doubtful if this is what David is referring to, for he describes himself as having waited patiently on the LORD, and this can hardly have been the attitude of heart of those who were unconverted.

"And He hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God:

Many shall see it, and fear,

And shall trust in the LORD" (verse 3).

Deliverance should tune the heart, and put a new song in the mouth. "God is unto us a God of deliverances" (Psalm 68. 20). Our first deliverance from sin's penalty and Satan's power should ever be the cause of a song, as was the case of Israel on the Red sea shore: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD" (Exodus 15. 1). And the heavenly choir of saints who come victorious from the beast, his image and his number, shall stand upon the glassy sea mingled with fire and sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb (Revelation 15. 3). Even so it was with the psalmist; he sang of his deliverance. He said that many would see it and fear, and trust in the LORD. Little, I think, did David know of the many who because of his deliverances would do this.

"Blessed is the **man** that maketh the LORD His **trust**,  
**And** respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies"  
 (verse 4).

Blessed is plural here; blessings on the **man** (GEBER, a strong man) that maketh the LORD (Jehovah, the **God of Israel**) his **trust**, and turns not unto the proud people, nor **unto** such as fall away treacherously. Such was the **kind** of **man** that God **and David found** pleasure in.

"**Many, O LORD my God, are** the wonderful works which Thou hast done,

**And** Thy thoughts which **are** to us-ward:

They cannot **be set in order** unto Thee;

**If I** would declare **and speak** of them,

They are **more** than can **be numbered**" (verse 5).

Nothing could be more **true** than this **statement** by David as to **God's** wonderful works **and** thoughts. The **more men** learn **and are** allowed to know, according to what was prophesied of **by** Daniel, that knowledge would **be** increased in the last **time** (Daniel 12. 4), the more wonderful are God's works **seen to be**, **and** the profundity of **divine** thought which has **been since Genesis 1**, **and** that which **pertains** to this earth **is** only a **minute part** of all the works **and** thoughts of God. But have God's wonderful works **made men** more God-fearing, more reverential of the **Divine Being**? We **must say** from what we read **and hear**, **Not** one little bit. What **secrets God** has allowed **men** to discover! **and** their **successes** have only, we fear, **added** to their pride; **and** nations glare at nations from behind the weapons of destruction that they have invented. But, **says** the psalmist, **God's** wonderful works **and** thoughts **are** "to us-ward", toward the people of Israel, **and** Christians can also say, "to us-ward". Though **God is good** to all, **yet** His thoughts **are first** of all **and** primarily toward His own in this world. His works **and** thoughts **cannot be set in order or numbered**, **and** the following **verses (6-8)** tell us what are the **greatest** of all **God's** works **and** thoughts, **even** the **incarnation** and the **sacrifice** of Christ **Jesus** His beloved Son.

"**Sacrifice (peace offering) and offering** (meal offering) Thou hast no delight in;

**Mine ears** hast Thou **opened (digged):**

**Burnt offering and sin offering** hast Thou **not** required.

Then said I, Lo, I am come;

In the roll of the **book** it is written of **Me:**

I delight to do Thy will, O My God;

**Yea**, Thy law is within **My heart**" (verses 6, 7, 8).

These **verses** are **quoted** in Hebrews 10. 5-7 with **reference** to the **Lord coming** into the world to be the Antitypical **Sacrifice** of the sacrifices in **Leviticus** chapters 1 to 4—the **peace sacrifice**, the **meal offering**, the **burnt offering** and the **sin offering**. The **quotation** is quite evidently **made** from the **Septuagint**, from which it has **but a few** slight differences. Both the **Septuagint** and the **Greek quotation** in Hebrews 10 are **different** from the Hebrew original, particularly the Hebrew, "**Mine ears** hast Thou **opened (or digged)**", which in the **Greek is**, "a body hast Thou **prepared Me**". Some have thought that the **opening** of the ears in the Hebrew **refers** to the **boring** of the ear

(one ear) of the Hebrew servant, as in Exodus 21. 2, 5, 6; Deuteronomy 15. 12-17. Undoubtedly the digging or opening of the ears was that the one to whom the ears belonged should hear, a thing most vital in one who was a servant. Then why was the Greek translation, "a body hast Thou prepared Me"? It seems to be this, that ears are ever in a body, and are the chief members in one who is a servant, to hear his master's voice, so that the thought of a prepared body predominated in the mind of the translators of the Septuagint. The Levitical offerings gave God no pleasure, therefore the Lord came into the world in a body, by birth, so that He might give pleasure to God, both in His incarnation and in His sacrificial work on the Cross. Of this the Old Testament Scriptures bore testimony in the prophecies relative to His birth and death. Many of these will come readily to the reader's mind.

"I have published righteousness in the great congregation;  
Lo, I will not refrain my lips,  
O LORD, Thou knowest.  
I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart;  
I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation:  
I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from  
the great congregation" (verses 9, 10).

Whilst what is said in verses 6 to 8 is true of the Lord only in His incarnation and sacrificial death, these verses (9, 10) may have an application to the Lord and to David as well. David was chosen to feed Israel, and he fed them according to the integrity of his heart (Psalm 78. 72). But in the case of the Lord, He "began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up" (Acts 1. 1, 2). Because of the greatness of His works and His much teaching, His friends said, "He is beside Himself", that is, He was stricken with madness, and the scribes said, "He hath Beelzebub" (Mark 3. 20-22). But no one can read the Gospels without seeing that He preached righteousness, faithfulness, salvation, lovingkindness and truth in the great congregation, and His congregation is greater now than ever. Even in the pestilent and lawless days that are in front of us, the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole inhabited earth to all nations (Matthew 24. 14) by the gospel preachers of those days.

"Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from me, O LORD:

Let Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth continually preserve me.  
For innumerable evils have compassed me about,  
Mine iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to  
look up;

They are more than the hairs of mine head, and my heart hath  
failed me" (verses 11, 12).

These words were true of David, but not of the Lord Jesus. David sought for God's tender mercies, and that His lovingkindness (mercy) and truth would preserve him continually. Mercy and truth are often referred to in the Old Testament, and they carry the mind to the Holy of Holies wherein was the Ark with the law of God, God's truth, and over which was the blood-sprinkled Mercy-seat. Undoubtedly the mind of the holy men of old thought of God's truth in His law and the mercy which flowed from His throne in Israel, the Mercy-seat. These two parts of the furniture of the Tabernacle spoke of Christ. Of Him we can sing,

"**Mercy and truth unite,**  
 Oh, 'tis a wondrous sight,  
 All sights above!"

The psalmist speaks of innumerable **evils** about him, **and** of his iniquities having overtaken him, and that they were more than the hairs of his head. He was not able **to** look up **and** his heart failed him. **We may say, What a sinner! but we may better say, What a saint!** for it is **saints** that **feel** how **many** and **grievous** are their sins.

"**Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me:**

**Make haste to help me, O LORD.**

Let them **be** ashamed **and** confounded together

That **seek after my** soul **to destroy** it:

Let them **be turned** backward and brought **to dishonour**

That delight in **my** hurt.

Let them **be** desolate **by** reason of their shame

That **say** unto **me, Aha, Aha"** (verses 13, 14, 15).

David **asks** that the LORD might **be** pleased to deliver him, **and** that He would **make** haste to help him. Here, **as in very many** of his psalms, he writes of his **adversaries**, those that would have destroyed him, **and** sought his hurt, who were **ready** when they saw him in trouble to shout, "Aha, Aha". David **seeks** that such will **be** **ashamed**, confounded together, **turned back**, brought **to dishonour** and **made** desolate. His prayer to God shows that his hope was in **God**, not in **man**, nor **yet** was his deliverance **by** his own strength and scheming. **He knew** that God would deal justly with those who delighted in his hurt.

"**Let** all those that **seek** Thee rejoice **and** be glad in Thee:

Let such as love Thy salvation **say** continually,

The LORD **be** magnified.

But **I am** poor **and** needy;

**Yet** the Lord thinketh upon **me:**

Thou **art my** help **and** my deliverer;

**Make no tarrying, O my God"** (verses 16, 17).

David quickly changes from his **cry** for deliverance **and** help, **and** for his adversaries to **be** dealt with, to a call to those that **seek** the LORD to rejoice **and** be glad in Him, **and** to those that loved His salvation to **say** continually, "The LORD **be** magnified". One often feels within oneself this **very** emotion to magnify the **Lord as one** feels within oneself the richness of His **mercy and grace** that **one** has known. Often when one is walking about one feels this upsurge of appreciation of God's goodness. The psalmist's inward emotions changed quickly from shower to sunshine. One moment he is down in the valley of humiliation, **and at the next** his spirit has wafted him to the mountain top. Here he looks down upon himself **and** **says**, "But **I am** poor **and** needy; **yet** the Lord thinketh upon **me"**. Lord here is ADONAHY, the wealthy, sovereign Lord. It is well when we feel like David, poor **and** **needy**, that we think also of our wealthy Lord. **He** cries at the end to his God, his Help and Deliverer, to **make** no tarrying. **J. M.**

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 34

AUGUST, 1966

## EDITORIAL

The word "constitution" is not found in the Authorized or Revised versions of the Bible but, in the sense in which it occurs in our subject, the conception runs through both Old and New Testaments, for it is inherent in the character of God that there should be law and order throughout His kingdom.

Israel, before the reign of Saul, was a pure theocracy, the details of its constitution being contained in the Pentateuch. Exodus 24 describes how the Law was given to the people, who readily accepted it and promised obedience. The statutes were written in a book and the agreement ratified by the sprinkling of blood on the book and the people (Exodus 24. 1-8). The same order of things continued until the reign of Saul when at the people's request God gave them an earthly king. There had in consequence to be a change in the constitution, not that any part of the Law was suspended, but further rules were necessary for the proper conduct of the kingdom. Thus Samuel explained to the people "the manner of the kingdom" and wrote it in a book (I Samuel 10. 25, see also 8. 9, 11). The Hebrew word *MISHPAT*, here translated "manner", contains the thought of judgement (see Leviticus 24. 22) and so has a direct bearing on our subject. The modified form of theocracy continued until the Babylonian captivity, after which, for a short time, there seems to have been a return in some measure to the constitutional arrangements that existed before the monarchy, although secular government was, of course, in the hands of the Persian Emperor.

Because of the irremediable failure of Israel, the kingdom of God was eventually taken away from them and, under the New Covenant, given to the "little flock" (Matthew 21. 43; Luke 12. 32). The New Testament is primarily about this spiritual kingdom, whose constitution, as some contributors suggest, is there termed "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" and also "the apostles' teaching".

In recent months few contributors have succeeded in doing more than touch the fringe of the subject; many papers could be improved by a deeper or wider approach. It is not necessary to restrict remarks to the scriptures given in the syllabus, provided that brethren give careful attention to the need to keep within the proper boundaries of the subject.

L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT PAUL AND THE CHURCHES OF GOD—

#### (1) THEIR CONSTITUTION

From Melbourne, Australia. —Paul and Barnabas observed the growth of the saints and saw men who had developed to the stage of

**being** capable of feeding the church of God. These **men were pointed** out as elders or overseers **by the** apostles, Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14. 23). **The** qualifications of overseers and deacons are of a high standard, **not** that **they must be** sinless, **but they must be men** who had learned to walk in the light of God's word. In Acts 16. 3 we read of Paul, taking a young man Timothy, with the fellowship of the presbytery (1 Timothy 4. 14), **who** was well reported of by **the** saints, to accompany him in his journeys, to learn the work of **the** evangelist. They went throughout the area delivering the decrees to be kept, which were the outcome of the conference of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem (Acts 15). Paul taught the same things in each assembly (1 Corinthians 7. 17). Uniformity of teaching is essential to fellowship "that ye all speak the same thing" (1 Corinthians 1. 10). One of **the** customs of the churches in Paul's day was that brethren should have their heads uncovered and have short hair, whilst the sisters **had** their heads covered and had long hair when gathered in assembly meetings. This custom has not been altered to this day because it is enjoined in the word of God.

P. W. A.

**From Southport.** —Paul was mightily used by the Lord in the planting of assemblies; in the case of Corinth his co-worker Apollos watered by the word, "but God gave the increase" (1 Corinthians 3. 6). The apostles confirmed the souls of the disciples, and exhorted them to continue in the faith (Acts 14. 22). And when they had ordained elders in every church, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed (Acts 14. 23). Paul in all his missionary journeys laid the foundation of many assemblies or churches of God, and so the churches were established in the Faith, and increased in numbers daily.

The responsibility of carrying out the work of an assembly depended upon its overseers, which the Holy Spirit has made, to feed the church of God (Acts 20. 28). In the church at Philippi there were overseers and deacons (Philippians 1. 1). In Titus 1. 5 we read that Paul left Titus in Crete to appoint elders in every city, that is, in the assemblies.

In 1 Timothy 3. 1-13 are given the qualifications of overseers and deacons. They must not be novices lest being lifted up with pride they fall into the condemnation of the devil. They must have a good report of them which are without. In Acts 15 we find the elders with the apostles in Jerusalem to consider the will of God for His together people, thus the unity of the churches of God was assured. Unity amongst leaders is an absolute necessity, clearly taught in the Scriptures, and overseers should act in the fullest fellowship in exercising joint care in the churches of God.

Thomas Brown

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —The details of the constitution of churches of God are known largely through Paul's writings. Paul was never a disciple during the Lord's life and he describes himself as one 'born out of due time'. Nevertheless, his knowledge of the churches of God is most detailed and he received it from God directly by revelation

of Jesus Christ. The following passages show the extent of this revelation, covering—

- (1) the Remembrance (1 Corinthians 11. 23-27),
- (2) uniformity of practice among the churches (1 Corinthians 7. 17).
- (3) church government (Acts 14. 23; 1 Timothy 3. 1-13),
- (4) behaviour in the church (1 Timothy 3. 14-15),
- (5) discipline within the church (1 Corinthians 5. 13),
- (6) fellowship between churches (2 Corinthians 9. 1-5).

The fact that his understanding agreed with that given to the other apostles by the Lord Himself would be abundant proof of the reality of Paul's conversion. The days of the early church were fast-moving times of revelation, but through them all one can trace the work of the Holy Spirit in revelation, culminating in the New Testament Scriptures that contain the pattern of church truth.

A. C. Bishop

### EXTRACTS

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Paul and Barnabus visited the Gentile churches in Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening them in the Faith and appointing elders or overseers in every church. It was noted that the plural was used here, "elders in every church" (Acts 14. 21-23). In Acts 15 we read how elders came together to iron out a difference of opinion on the question of circumcision and we see here very clearly the unity among the leaders.

Paul and Barnabas were given the right hand of fellowship that they should go unto the Gentiles, by James, Cephas and John who were reputed to be pillars (Galatians 2. 9). Paul also delivered to the churches, for them to observe, the decrees which had been ordained by the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem, and by his teaching they were strengthened spiritually and increased in number. These decrees were not man-made but given by the Spirit. As the Gentile churches were taught by Paul, we in our day have learned much from his writings to them concerning government and conduct in the house of God. From 1 Corinthians 11. 16 it is seen that there was no room for two opinions and the same things were carried out by all the churches. Paul later in the same epistle says, "For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace; as in all the churches of the saints" (1 Corinthians 14. 33).

Those who have the rule in the church have a very high standard set before them in 1 Timothy 3. Deacons have to prove themselves in the church by their service and are exhorted to be blameless. An equally high standard is set for women in the words, "Faithful in all things".

J. H. Mitchell

**From Methil.** —Paul not only planted churches, but also appointed for them elders in every church (Acts 14. 23 see also Titus 1. 5). It is to be noted that it was elders, i. e., more than one elder for each church. This is important, for we believe from the Scriptures that there is no thought of one man rule, but that the responsibility for ruling, feeding and caring for God's saints rests on the shoulders of

overseers or elders (Acts 14. 23; 20. 28). Paul in writing to Timothy tells him what are the necessary qualifications for those who are overseers and also for those who are deacons in churches of God. They are to be proven men according to 1 Timothy 3. 10.

The letter by Paul to the Philippians is addressed to all the saints, bishops and deacons in the church of God at Philippi. The title, church of God, indicates that its origin, authority and constitution are of God. All the churches of God together form the Fellowship of God's Son (1 Corinthians 1. 9).

The Scriptures show that it is the mind of God that there should be unity of doctrine and of practice throughout the Fellowship (1 Corinthians 7. 17). The apostle Paul's teaching not only applied to the church of God in Corinth, but embraced all other churches throughout the Fellowship (1 Corinthians 7. 17). Paul also sent Timothy to put the saints in remembrance of his ways which be in Christ, even as he taught *everywhere in every church* (1 Corinthians 4. 17). This again emphasizes the oneness of the Fellowship.

Robert Surgeon, Neville Coomer

**From** Crowborough. —The first church of God was in Jerusalem (Acts 8. 1, Galatians 1. 13). The origin and pattern of this church was divine. Other churches of God came into existence later which were of the same pattern. Their doctrine was the same and their practice was the same (1 Corinthians 4. 17, and 11. 16).

The church of God in Philippi was composed of saints, bishops (or overseers) and deacons (Philippians 1. 1). The Holy Spirit makes overseers (Acts 20. 28) and men recognize their gift and appoint them (Acts 14. 23).

The Breaking of Bread is a prime function of the churches of God. On the Lord's Day morning we can function as a holy priesthood and offer up our spiritual sacrifices of praise.

The churches of God in the aggregate form God's house today, for He "dwelleth not in houses made with hands" (Acts 7. 48), but in a spiritual house composed of living stones (1 Peter 2. 5). What is meant by the constitution of the churches of God? [1], If the word constitution is taken to mean "the body of principles by which a community is governed", then the constitution of a church of God is "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). J. Robertson

**From** Hamilton. —Basic to the character of churches of God is the establishment of divine rule among them, and to this the apostle Paul directed himself. In the churches of Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, Paul and Barnabas "appointed elders in every church" (Acts 14. 23). We noted that, thus early, the Holy Spirit was establishing through the apostles two fundamental principles of rule within the churches of God: —the necessity of a plural elderhood and the necessity of elders in each assembly. Titus was charged to perform a similar service in the Cretan assemblies (Titus 1. 5), and to Timothy, Paul wrote not only of overseers but also of deacons. His Philippian epistle he addressed to

the "saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the overseers and deacons" (Philippians 1. 1), thus **identifying** the three **groups** which **comprise** each assembly.

The high standard of personal life and testimony which **must be seen** in those who would **serve as overseers and deacons** in the churches of **God is plainly set before us by** the apostle in 1 Timothy 3.

Throughout the churches, the teaching of the apostle was of a **uniform** character. The **fruit of this is seen in the unity of doctrine and practice manifest among** them. This is exemplified in Paul's **comment to the Corinthian assembly** when dealing with the **vexed matter of subjection, "If any man seemeth to be contentious we have no such custom, neither the churches of God"**. The **pattern of divine unity** was ever **before his mind, "In whom each several building, fitly framed together, growth into a holy temple in the Lord"** (Ephesians 2. 21). His efforts in teaching the disciples were always **geared to the accomplishment of this end.**  
R. L.

**From Birmingham.** —Paul taught the **unity of the churches as seen in a collective elderhood**. This **unity** was also **seen in** the local sphere, with a **plurality of elders in every church** collectively dealing with matters of a local nature. The apostles' teaching **must be taught**. This responsibility falls **on the overseers and deacons**, so Paul writes concerning the character and behaviour of **overseers and deacons** (1 Timothy 3).

The institution of the **Feast of Remembrance** was **by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself**. But Paul **passed on the divine command for** the Gentile churches, and showed the **significance of the symbols in** the Breaking of the bread. This is fundamental truth for the churches of **God to be** always observed.  
D. H. Elson

**From Derby.** —Perhaps it would seem ironic that Paul who **once persecuted the church of God** (see Galatians 1. 13) should be the one to whom was later entrusted much of the responsibility for teaching the churches of the Gentiles. However, with the Holy **Spirit in his heart and guiding** his teaching, he felt **very deeply about** all the churches of God. He saw the **necessity for elders** (Acts 14. 23), and he was **given divine wisdom for appointing** these. He **makes clear in Acts 20. 28** the shepherd-like quality of **overseers and the preciousness of the flock** which they lead. 1 Timothy 3 shows **us the qualifications of the overseer**.

Paul also saw the **importance of maintaining unity in** the churches. Examples of this **are given in** 1 Corinthians 4. 17, and 7. 17.

A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway

**From Cardiff.** —From the writings of Paul and the account of his activities in the Acts, a comprehensive **picture of church constitution can be obtained**.

A church **consists of saints, men and women disciples; born again persons who have been baptized and added to their respective churches**. The **saints of a church are gathered together for the purposes of the**

Remembrance, for prayer and thanksgiving, and for edification. At these gatherings everything is done in an orderly manner (1 Corinthians 14. 40), and women have to remain silent and have their heads covered (1 Corinthians 11. 5, 14. 34). Saints also go forth to testify publicly to their Lord and Saviour, which may lead to the saving of souls and an increase in the church. Saints carry out their activities in fellowship with each other (Acts 15. 40). When a saint moves from one church to another there is fellowship between such saints in a letter of commendation (Romans 16. 1, 2). Saints may be disciplined and even excommunicated for incorrect teaching or improper behaviour (1 Corinthians 5; Titus 3. 10).

In each church there are elders who tend and feed the flock (Acts 14. 23, 20. 28). The flock is to honour the elders, especially such as rule well (1 Thessalonians 5. 12, 13).

That overseers and elders are the same group of men can be seen when Paul addressed the elders of the church in Ephesus whom he had called to him, as overseers (Acts 20. 17, 28).

Churches are not constituted independant units but are in one Fellowship. They have a common practice and all hold the truth called the Faith. Likewise all elders are fellow-elders of one flock.

A. G. Stockwell

**From Carlisle.** —Recognizing Paul's unique New Testament role in communicating truth concerning the churches of God, we considered the unity of the churches and the pattern of rule and government which God used Paul to expound. We noted also that Paul was the foremost New Testament writer to convey the Spirit's mind on "the church which is His Body", and we looked specially at the important ministry of the apostle to the church in Corinth with regard to its constitution by God.

1 Corinthians 3 occupied much of our attention and we thought of the triple presentation here of God's people and His house as expressed in divinely constituted churches of God. Firstly we have "God's husbandry" or tilled land, in which men as planters and waterers have such great responsibility under God who bestows the increase. Then we considered 'God's building', clearly not the church of which the Lord said, "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it", but an edifice growing and surviving by means of duly exercised human responsibility. The constitution of churches of God comprising the house of God is distinct from the Body of Christ. Thirdly, 'a temple (sanctuary) of God', in which dwells the Holy Spirit, a holy thing but exposed to possible desecration and destruction by man. Paul knew all about this in his memory of his laying waste the church in Jerusalem.

This teaching which enshrines so much of importance on the constitution of churches of God is, however, itself embedded in this chapter in a sharp rebuke and warning about deplorable spiritual condition, carnality, and worldly wisdom. Thus we saw how inseparable is our subject this month from that for next. J. H., J. D. T.

**From Atherton.** —A complete picture of church constitution is indicated in Ephesians 2. 19-22, which mentions (a) the apostles and prophets (their foundational teaching), (b) Christ Jesus being the chief corner stone, (c) each several building, the churches of God, which together compose the temple or house of God spoken of as a habitation for God in the Spirit [2].

The church of God in Corinth is spoken of as God's building (1 Corinthians 3. 9). Acts 18. 1-11 gives us the planting of the church. Thus Paul says in writing to Corinth, "I planted". He was also the wise masterbuilder. Not only did he as an apostle lay the foundation in his teaching, but he built thereon, as well as did others (1 Corinthians 3. 10-15).

Constitution involves establishment, featuring governing laws. What the Law was to Israel, the Faith is for churches of God. Thus we read of one Lord, one faith, one baptism (Ephesians 4. 5). Oneness of teaching is essential to all the churches. Unity is only achieved as we seek to be one in doctrine and practice. The apostle exhorts that a letter read in one church should be read in another (Colossians 4. 16). Thus the entire teaching in the epistles of Paul though varied in its presentation is for all the saints.

G. A. Jones

**From Liverpool.** —The word constitution means among other things, the fundamental laws of government in relation to a people.

The way in which the churches of God are governed is mentioned in Acts 16. 1-5 "They (Paul and Timothy) delivered them the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem". It was thus that the churches were strengthened in the Faith, and increased in number daily.

An important part of the constitution of churches of God is that relating to the marriage bond. The apostle clearly indicates in his letter to the Corinthians that the judgement was not for them alone, but was a fundamental principle of the Faith governing every church of God. "So ordain I in all the churches" (1 Corinthians 7. 17).

In 1 Corinthians 11 are the important instructions relating to the Remembrance. There were other things to be "set in order" later, but what had already been delivered to the Corinthians needed to be re-stated. These instructions given to churches of God are a fundamental part of their constitution. 1 Timothy 3. 1-13 shows that overseers and deacons have a responsible place in the church and states what is required of them as touching character, conduct and spiritual attainment.

2 Timothy 2. 2 shows the scriptural method of maintaining continuity of doctrine: by committing to other faithful men the Faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Titus 1. 5 shows how a need in Crete was to be met through the discernment of Titus under the direction of the Lord through the apostle as to the appointing of elders in every city.

R. Harrison, A. H.

**Fran Glasgow (Parkhead).** —God called Paul to be an apostle to the Gentiles so that they might turn to serve God in His kingdom. In the power of the Holy Spirit he revealed to them the truth of divine rule in the churches of God. We read in Acts 14. 23 that the apostle Paul and others with him appointed elders in every church and having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they had believed. Therefore we see that a church of God must be constituted with elders to rule, but not as lording it over their charge, but with meekness and fear as those who will give an account of the souls that are under their care in just the same way as the shepherd is held accountable for the sheep of his flock (Hebrews 13. 17). The saints are exhorted to obey them that have the rule over them, and submit themselves to that divine rule in the will of the Lord. It is also necessary that those in churches of God should be taught the revealed will of God, which is called the apostles' teaching (Acts 2. 42). As the natural body requires nourishing food for its health, so also the souls of the saints in churches of God require nourishing spiritual meat so that saints may attain unto full growth. Fred Harvey

**From Kingston upon Thames.** —The constitution of the churches of God is the subject matter of much of the epistles. Paul did not shrink from declaring the whole counsel of God, which he personally had received. Responsibility was given to men to keep order in the churches.

One of the first things the apostles did was to appoint elders or overseers in every church. They also gave a report of their work for the Lord to the churches they visited.

Those in churches of God should abide by the code of behaviour set out in the epistles (1 Corinthians 11. 16). God has reasons for such demands.

The appointment of the elders or overseers was dependant on them having the desire and on their suitability (1 Timothy 3. 1-13).

Recognition of deacons was also dependant on certain qualifications. Many "church" authorities use the plural "deacons" as referring to males and females to substantiate the work of the "deaconess". Other scriptures show a restriction on the participation of women gathered in church capacity. L. Parker

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —Paul's knowledge of the kingdom of God left him in no doubt about the necessity of unity of doctrine and practice among the churches of God (1 Corinthians 7. 17) and the need to appoint elders who would feed the people under their care with the word of God, as a shepherd gives pasture to the flock. These would be responsible to see the word carried out, that the testimony might continue undimmed. The conception which Paul had of government among the churches may be considered in the light of the rule in Israel, to bring out possible comparisons or contrasts: for example the rule exercised by Moses, and later by judges, prophets, and kings, and in remnant days by their leaders.

The influence of the Holy Spirit is all-important in the churches of God, as He distributes gifts in those churches according to His own will. The souls of disciples respond to the exhortation of Spirit-taught and Spirit-exercised elders. Yet how easy it is for us to change our values, though we have access to the whole counsel of God. Nevertheless we have a unique opportunity in our day to uphold the vision which Paul was granted of the churches of God. Eric Archibald

**From Vancouver, B. C.** —The word constitution means a standing together and a holding firm a doctrine by a unified people. This was always in Paul's mind as he went on his journeys from church to church and also in his letters. Not only did he wish each church to stand together in testimony—but that all churches should realize that they were in one Fellowship. This constitution, a divine creation, must have its God-given rules and regulations which all the church must follow. When the churches were young in Paul's day they had the constitution as revealed to the apostles, and this constitution has not changed right up to the present time.

With regard to those who comprise the church which adheres to this constitution, each man and woman has a function in that constitution. This means that if a saint fails he is contributing to the collapse of the very basis of the constitution (1 Corinthians 1. 9).

The choosing of elders seems to have been one of the most important elements necessary, as seen in Acts 14, 23. This would be of the utmost importance, for there should be material from which elders could be appointed. J. Bell jr., J. Pope

COMMENTS

[1] (**Crowborough**). —See "Editorial", which deals with this matter of the constitution of Israel as the people of God, and of that of the new people. Their constitution was in the terms of the Covenant given by God and read in their hearing by Moses in Exodus 19 and 24; whereupon on their confessed obedience, they, the book of the Covenant and the altar were sprinkled with blood. The Lord during His ministry taught His disciples things which were fundamental to the new people composed of His disciples, and for some forty days after His resurrection He continued to speak to them of "the things concerning the kingdom of God", things fundamental to the people, which at one time were no people, but who were now the people of God (1 Peter 2. 10). Note how this new people were God's elect, according to His foreknowledge, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. The parallel between Israel and God's new people of this dispensation is very close (1 Peter 1. 1, 2). J. M.

[2] (**Atherton**). —It should be noted that Ephesians 2. 21, 22 refers to the church of God in Ephesus. Note the force of the words, "In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the

Spirit". Those in Ephesus who were builded together are included in each several building (or every building). In verse 21 it is every building, or every church of God, which were fitly framed together, whereas in verse 22 it is the saints who are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was dwelling in them as the temple of God, as in 1 Corinthians 3. 16, 17.

J. M.

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Questions from Crowborough.** —(1) When and how are we called into the Fellowship (1 Corinthians 1. 9)?

(2) Can a church of God function properly as such without overseers? In Acts 14. 23 Paul and Barnabus ordained elders in every church. Does this indicate that for a time these were without elders?

**Answer.** —(1) The call of God to believers comes through the word of God (as the call to sinners is through the gospel), and the obedience of believers to God's word leads them to find a place in a church of God which is part of the Fellowship of God's Son Jesus Christ our Lord. We need to see that the objective sense of Fellowship, a community, is different from subjective fellowship which we may know with God the Father and with His Son through the Holy Spirit. We have also similar words in faith and the Faith which convey different ideas.

(2) The churches of God in Galatia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, existed before there were elders recognized in them, but those men who were appointed elders would be doing the work before they were appointed.

J. M.

**Question from Melbourne**—1 Timothy 3. 11, the Authorized Version says "wives" and the Revised says "women". Is this referring to the behaviour of the wives of deacons, or does it indicate that there were sisters who were deaconesses?

**Answer.** —There is no word in the Greek for "wives". A wife was this man's or that man's woman, and stood in relationship to her man as no other woman could during their lifetime. Likewise the man to the woman. Phoebe was a servant, or deaconess, of the church in Cenchreae, and the manner of her deacon-work was in the fact that she was a succourer of many and of Paul himself (Romans 16. 1, 2). This is the beautiful and needful work of deaconesses. They were not preachers and teachers of the word as men were to be. They had their own very necessary place to fill and work to do.

J. M.

### NOTES ON THE PSALMS

#### PSALM 41

This is the last psalm in the first book of the psalms. All the psalms therein were written by David, as we know from the headings, save Psalms 1, 10, 33, which have no headings. Though Psalm 2 has no

heading, we know from Acts 4. 25, 26 that David was its writer. It is quite possible that David was the writer of **the** three other psalms. As the book of the law is divided into five books, so the psalms are also divided into five books.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor:  
The LORD will deliver him in the day of evil.  
The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive, and he shall be  
blessed upon the earth;  
And deliver not Thou him unto the will of his enemies" (verses  
1, 2).

"Blessed" here is plural. The poor are the feeble, weak or sick, and to consider them is to attend to them. Such as do this, the LORD will reward by delivering them in the evil day. He will be preserved, kept alive, and blessed on the earth. David pleads for him that the LORD will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. Great blessings were to be the portion of the man that considered the poor.

"The LORD will support him upon the couch of languishing:  
Thou makest all his bed in his sickness" (verse 3).

Here is a further recompense for the man who attends the weak. The time may come when he himself will be languishing on his couch, and then the LORD would see that he is cared for, he that cared for others. He would support or strengthen him, and turn his bed in his sickness. J. M.

"I said, O LORD, have mercy upon me:  
Heal my soul; for I have sinned against Thee.  
Mine enemies speak evil against me, saying,  
When shall he die, and his name perish?" (verses 4, 5).

This psalm, as we shall see as we go on, had its place in the life of David at the time of the rebellion of Absalom against his father. David looks back to his past sin which brought this calamity upon him, for though he was forgiven by God, yet God took governmental dealings upon his acts which left a black mark on his otherwise fair record. The LORD said, "The sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised Me" (2 Samuel 12. 10). He pleads with God to have mercy upon him and to heal his soul, for he had sinned against Him. His enemies were speaking against him as to when he would die, and his name perish, and the tide of opposition to David was rising under Absalom's leadership.

"And if he come to see me, he speaketh vanity (falsehood,  
R. V. M.);  
His heart gathereth iniquity to itself:  
When he goeth abroad, he telleth it" (verse 6).

This seems to be a reference to Absalom and his falsehood, as recorded in 2 Samuel 15. 1-12, not only in the matter of stealing the hearts of the men of Israel, but also of his vow in Hebron. Being allowed by David to go in peace, he consequently sent spies to all the tribes, saying that when they heard the trumpet sound, they were to say, "Absalom is king in Hebron".

"All that hate me whisper together against me:

Against me do they devise my hurt.

An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him:

And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more" (verses 7, 8).

There was a whispering campaign throughout the tribes of Israel against David, the consequence of which was that they devised his hurt. "An evil disease" was not a physical disease, it was "a thing of Belial", or worthlessness, some evil thing was cleaving fast to David, and now that he is down he shall rise up no more. His case as he left Jerusalem, climbed the slopes of Olivet, and descended and crossed the Jordan, as told in 2 Samuel 15. 30-37, and also in chapter 16, seemed hopeless.

"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread,

Hath lifted up his heel against me" (verse 9).

Here David refers to Ahithophel his familiar friend. "Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor". "And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness". "And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him". "And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counselled in those days, was as if a man inquired at the oracle of God: so was all the counsel of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom" (2 Samuel 15. 12, 31; 16. 15, 23). The counsel of Ahithophel and of Hushai and Archite (David's friend) was sought, "And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom" (2 Samuel 17. 14). "And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home, unto his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself; and he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father" (2 Samuel 17. 23). Such was the end of the traitor Ahithophel. Whilst Psalm 41. 9 has an application to Ahithophel, the words have a deeper meaning and were fulfilled in the traitor Judas, for the Lord said, "I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth My bread lifeth up his heel against Me" (John 13. 18). Ahithophel is referred to again by David in Psalm 55. 12, 13, 20, 21, words which are true no doubt also of Judas, one of the Twelve. Both hanged themselves after their treacherous acts.

"But Thou, O LORD, have mercy upon me, and raise me up,

That I may requite them.

By this I know that Thou delightest in me,

Because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.

And as for me, Thou upholdest me in mine integrity,

And settest me before Thy face for ever" (verses 10, 11, 12).

*(to be continued, D. V.)*

J.

M.

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

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## EDITORIAL

Of all the churches of God mentioned in the New Testament, we probably know more about the history of the one in Ephesus than any other. The story began with Paul's first fleeting visit on his journey from Corinth to Syria (Acts 18. 18-23). Ephesus, the gateway to the Roman province of Asia, had probably been in Paul's mind for some time as an important centre for the spread of the gospel, but he had been until then forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia (Acts 16. 6). The Jews' initial response to the gospel message was favourable (18. 19, 20) as it had been on some other occasions (13. 43, 14. 1), but he was unable to accede to their request to stay longer. Priscilla and Aquila, who had travelled with Paul from Corinth, remained behind and served the Lord with distinction in what must now have been a church of God (18. 27).

Paul shortly returned and spent three fruitful years in the district, during which time the gospel was preached so effectively throughout Asia that, as in Macedonia, the world was "turned upside down", as the disturbances among both the magicians and silversmiths testified. But Satan was soon at work within the church as well as outside, making it necessary, when Paul left, for Timothy to stay in order to deal with false teaching (1 Timothy 1. 3).

The apostle's intense interest in the welfare of this strategically important church is demonstrated by the trouble he took to seize his last opportunity of conferring with the overseers (Acts 20. 17, 25). Luke's tender account of Paul's address and the scene which followed touch the heart; those present must have long remembered the exhortations and warnings they heard that day. The dangers foreseen by the apostle were not long in developing. Near the end of his life there was widespread apostasy in Asia, and the second letter to Timothy contains renewed urgent warnings about heresy (2 Timothy 1. 15, 2. 17, 4. 1-4).

The close attention given by both Paul and Timothy to the spiritual condition of the Ephesian church seems to have borne some fruit, for when in later years John wrote to them at the dictation of the Lord (Revelation 2. 1-7), evil men and false apostles had been properly dealt with, moreover, the Nicolaitan heresy had not been allowed to gain a foothold as it had in Pergamum. The Lord commended the church for its faithfulness in such matters but His one indictment echoes over the centuries to reach the churches of God today, "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love".

L. B.

**PAUL THE APOSTLE**  
**A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT**  
**PAUL AND THE CHURCHES OF GOD—(2) THEIR CONDITION**

**From Hamilton.**—One of the delightful facets of the character of the apostle Paul was the concern he manifested for the spiritual welfare of the churches of God. He clearly saw the dangers to which they were exposed. To the Corinthians he catalogued some of the sins which are liable to afflict God's people (2 Corinthians 12. 20), and it is not without significance that the common factor in the evils listed is the assertion of the individual will and opinion.

The ministry of Paul among the churches had as its objective the attainment by the saints unto "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4. 13). To the Galatian saints he revealed the intensity of his longing in this connexion. His anxiety over them he likened to the deep suffering of a woman in travail. He must have agonized long in prayer on their behalf. How like his Master he was in this! The earnestness of the apostle's care for the Galatians was equalled by that which he manifested at Ephesus, where he "ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20. 31).

This constant, earnest care characterized his dealings with all the assemblies. He knew much of physical weakness and discomfort. But overriding all was "that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11. 28). The word "presseth" indicates something of the urgency and unceasing character of the thought he took for the spiritual welfare of every saint. As he thought of some being caused to stumble (Gk. *Skandalizo*, to put a snare in the way), Paul was consumed with a righteous indignation that some of God's saints should thus be hindered.

His talk with the elders of Ephesus reveals the twofold method by which the apostles sought to strengthen the disciples and guard them from falling. Firstly, he used to the full the power of example. "In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak" (Acts 20. 35). This example was of inestimable value in its own right, as a good example always is. But it was also valuable as a qualifying factor to his ministry, as he admonished them night and day. Admonition is not simply correction, it is correction based on instruction. The apostle's corrective teaching was based on the Scriptures, and it was to these that he directed the elders, ere he parted from them. "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace." No surer safeguard against evil teachings and habits could have been recommended by Paul to the saints whose spiritual welfare he so deeply desired.

**R. L.**

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).**—Paul's great concern for the spiritual welfare of the churches of God was to some extent a result of his profound conception of their constitution and function. For he was not content with seeing but one unit of the house of God, as a man would be whose thoughts were always confined to the activities of his own assembly; looking instead for the clear and entire manifestation of God's counsel for His habitation in the Spirit in this dispensation, the apostle's care for all the churches which he visited was vastly increased when he saw each as part of the whole.

But at the same time Paul had a great capacity for sympathy with each brother and sister, each living stone built into the individual churches. He knew the value of brethren who could be depended on. Such dependability was a manifestation of the spiritual development described as the forming of Christ in the saints. *Martin Archibald*

**From Atherton.** —There were features in each church that were commendable, whereas there were also features which called for severe censure and corresponding action. For example, the apostle writes of the faith of the Roman and Ephesian churches, of the utterance, knowledge and gifts of the Corinthians, of the fellowship of the Philippians, as well as the love of the Colossians, and the work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope of the Thessalonians.

One of the most powerful ways of appeal is that of personal example. Paul brings before the churches the perfect example of Christ, as in Philippians 2. 1-8. In Him were seen love, kindness, gentleness, meekness and humility. In Acts 20 the apostle appeals to the elders of Ephesus, bringing before them his own example, "serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears" (verse 19). "By the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears" (verse 31). He hazarded his life for them. Thus to the elders came the solemn appeal, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock" (verse 28). The condition of the churches then, as now, depended very largely on this issue. Similarly the power of example is extended to deacons in 1 Timothy 3, and, in fact, to all brethren and sisters, and particularly to all those who take any public service in the churches.

Paul's care or anxiety for all the churches pressed upon him daily. This word "anxiety" (2 Corinthians 11. 28) means that which distracts the mind. Hence Paul writes of his fear, that when he again visited Corinth he would find a lapse to their state in their unconverted days.

An examination of the first epistle reveals how far the church in Corinth had lapsed into a sad spiritual condition. There were: - divisions (chapter 1), carnality and strife (chapter 3), fornication (chapter 5), prosecutions in the public courts (chapter 6), idol worship and sacrifices (chapter 8), love feasts and misbehaviour at the Breaking of the Bread (chapter 11), lack of love and care for each other (chapter 12), disorderliness in serving in the church (chapter 14). The second epistle indicates a measure of repentance, and whilst the irregularities of the first epistle may have been dealt with, yet the existing condition was far from the high standard set by Paul's exhortations.

The condition, too, of the Galatian churches was alarming. Judaizing teachers had so affected the saints that they were in the utmost danger of abandoning the gospel as taught by Paul.

*E. Birchall, G. A. J.*

## EXTRACTS

**From Methil.** —Paul's work brought many tears and trials. Besides the afflictions which he suffered from those without (2 Corinthians 11. 23-27), there was that which daily troubled the apostle, anxiety for all the churches of God, yet the power of Christ rested upon him. He suffered all for Christ's sake, and when he was weak, then was he strong (2 Corinthians 12. 10).

Corinth was a gifted church, yet what admonition Paul gave them was to edify them. Strife, jealousy, wrath, factions and whisperings should not have place among them, yet Paul feared lest he should find them in the church (2 Corinthians 12. 20)

Paul was a great example to the churches. To speak to and admonish others he himself required to be blameless (Acts 20. 35; Philippians 3. 17). His great fear was that the undesirable conditions prevailing in the various churches might destroy their unity.

It was necessary in some cases that a change of conduct be seen before the perplexity which filled Paul's heart could be eased. Had he become an enemy to those in Galatia, because he told the truth? (Galatians 4. 16, 19, 20). *David B. Reid*

**From Toronto, Ont.** —Paul's care was for those in all the churches. It was something which pressed upon him daily (2 Corinthians 11. 28), and verse 29 seems to point to a personal relationship. "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" is a fulfilment of 1 Corinthians 12. 26, "Whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it". Why would a man with such humility be humbled? (2 Corinthians 12. 19-21). Paul had a fear that when he should visit the Corinthians he would find them not adhering to the Faith once and for all delivered to the saints, and not following in the steps of the Lord. His presentation of the complete teaching would cause him to be humbled before God if any of the conditions of verse 20 were prevailing. Paul was greatly sensitive to the condition of the churches, his relationship to them was very close. Such expressions as "my little children" (Galatians 4. 19) show the concern of a father. The sensitivity of the apostle stemmed from a deep love for the Lord: "the love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Corinthians 5. 14). *£. Gillespie*

**From Derby.** —Paul could foresee that some of the churches would run into difficulties, especially after his departure. We understand from Acts 20. 29-31 that men called grievous wolves would enter in teaching perverse doctrine, leading others astray and making havoc of the church. Even some of the overseers would be responsible for this.

Paul's concern for the church in Ephesus was clearly seen, for he ceased not to admonish everyone night and day with tears. The condition of the church pressed heavily upon him and he had a personal involvement with every church in which he had laboured.

In 2 Corinthians 11. 28 Paul expresses his concern and anxiety for all the churches. Truly he expressed a deep fatherly affection for the flock (Galatians 4. 19).

Paul had taken the gospel to them and laboured with them. He knew them and rejoiced when those who had received the Saviour continued to grow and become men of God. Yet he also sorrowed when life-service was lost to the Lord.

The condition of any church depends on the individuals who **form** it. *G. W. Conway, A. K. Smith*

**From Southport.** —We are aware of the terrible sin committed by a brother in the church in Corinth and of the steps Paul and the church took to rectify the matter (1 Corinthians 5. 3-6), and of the joy of Paul when the church had dealt with this sin and also in the brother's repentance (2 Corinthians 2. 3).

In several other scriptures Paul speaks of the condition of the churches with regard to the walk of the saints, (e. g. Ephesians 4. 1-3; 5. 15; 1 Timothy 3. 15; and Colossians 1. 10).

In Ephesus Paul "ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears"\* for three years. This was the measure of his love for those in the church of Ephesus. His method with the church in Corinth was the same, for, with regard to the sin of the **man** of his first epistle, he wrote with "many tears" that they might know the love which he had more abundantly for them (2 Corinthians 2. 4). His concern was greater because of his love. Paul "besought" the saints (Ephesians 4. 1); he did not command, the former was all the more effectual. Colossians 1. 9 tells of Paul praying for the church in Colossae, showing that he had them upon his heart always, for he had not ceased to pray for them. Their condition was a vital matter as Paul well knew.

Looking at the positive side, we read of Paul rejoicing that certain in Corinth repented (2 Corinthians 7. 9), and concerning the church in Philippi, Paul hoped to send Timothy that Paul might be of good comfort, when he knew their state (Philippians 2. 19).

*W. S. Holden*

**From Birmingham.** —How dear to Paul's heart were the saints of God! His anxiety for their condition of heart was sincere. As he wrote to the Galatians, he was concerned that the character of Christ should be seen in the disciples. The Galatian saints were erring on a doctrinal issue, and this was relevant to their spiritual condition.

The view was put forward that Paul (2 Corinthians 11. 29) was weakened because of the weakness of the saints and burned with concern at their stumbling. Others thought that Paul was speaking of his own weakness (as in verse 30 and again in chapter 12) for which God's grace was sufficient [1].

The condition of a church depends on the condition of each individual within it.

*R. B. Jones*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Paul's shepherd care for the condition of the early churches of God caused him to be moved in his heart with love for his fellow-saints. Like the Chief Shepherd, Paul bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of the New Testament saints. Although he had many trials laid on him by the outside world, his great concern was to care for the people of God. With the weak and immature in the Faith he came down to their level with teaching fit for their need (1 Corinthians 3. 1). The condition of the church here was surely a grief to Paul, for there were jealousies and strifes among them, **and** although he would far rather feed them with meat, yet in their condition of heart, he must needs feed them with milk.

Paul's chief objective was to see a people walking with pure hearts before God (2 Corinthians 11. 2). He knew that it was possible for God's people to sink so far in worldly sin, that God would have no pleasure in them, and would finally cease to dwell with them. Thus we see him using words of reproof, although he joyed not in them.

His care for the church at Ephesus was so great that he wept for them. Three years he was with them, setting them an example in all things, admonishing them and praying that they would be built up in faith unfeigned.

*Jas. Mitchell*

**From Kingston upon Thames.** —In 2 Corinthians 11. 27 we read of the many physical hardships that Paul had to endure. Besides all these outside hardships he was constantly worried about the welfare of churches.

Paul kept a strict eye on the churches. Upon discerning the start of false doctrines, loose practices, and disunity he would act with promptness but in kindness and consideration. Paul was afraid that there might be strife, jealously and wrath in the church. Perhaps some of the people in the church had practised these things before their conversion and were sliding back into their old ways.

Galatians 4. 19, 20 tells how Paul's heart was filled with anguish over his little children, who were so dear to him. He was a spiritual father to them. Paul would be anxious until the Lord Jesus was formed in them, so that they might not show a blurred image but a clear likeness of Christ. Paul very much wished to be with them; it would be so much easier for him to help them than by writing letters.

The overseers at Ephesus were exhorted by Paul to take shepherd care of the flock (Acts 20. 28). He then commends them to God and to the word of His grace; for only God can keep them out of danger and build them up. God will do the same for us. *P. Bartlett*

**From Carlisle.** —Paul's writings emphasize the need for churches of God to maintain a sound spiritual condition in keeping with their divine position. As well as giving doctrinal teaching relative to the churches of God, divinely planted and maintained, Paul frequently writes to correct errors of behaviour and practice which, if not corrected, would result in loss of spiritual power and testimony. His daily anxiety was for all the churches because he realized the adversary would do all in his power to destroy the churches he and others had laboured to establish. His ministry, both oral and written, was a perfect blend, establishing the divine constitution of all the churches and urging acceptance of a manner of life in keeping with such a high calling.

Paul's teaching and conduct are a striking example of how saints should behave toward each other, and because of this he had no hesitation in requesting a similar response from others (Philippians 4. 8, 9). *J. Hunter, R. Hyland*

**From Melbourne, Australia.** —The apostle Paul had a great love and care for the churches of God. He had a responsibility in a very wide sense. The responsibility of others may not go beyond the local church or district. His condition of the churches of God fell heavily on Paul. There were those who were "false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11. 13). These were turning away the hearts of the saints from the apostle Paul, and he writes to remind the saints of the sufferings he endured for the sake of the testimony. Satan ever tries to spoil or hinder the testimony of the churches of God.

His concern for the churches of God in Galatia was such that Paul "travailed" in his care and anxiety for them. There were those amongst them who tended to go back to the ordinances of the Law and were thus quickly removing from Him that called them in the grace of Christ (Galatians 1. 6). Thus he wrote throughout this epistle, setting forth the contrast between law and grace, and endeavouring to stop the slide which was evident because of the teachings of Jewish believers. This wrong teaching was troubling the saints.

Paul foresaw the entering in of grievous wolves amongst the **flock** and also the evil work of certain of the overseers. These would lead away some after themselves. He reminded the overseers of the church of God at Ephesus of his faithful ministry, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, oftentimes speaking with tears. He knew that the time would come when there would be those who would not endure sound doctrine (2 Timothy 4, 3, 4) and solemnly counselled the overseers that they should take heed unto themselves and to the little flock.

*P. W. A.*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —When saints lapsed in conduct, Paul corrected them in all tenderness and love, yet without compromise of divine principles, which he held in the highest esteem at all times. Two examples are taken: one in which an individual is concerned and the other in which a section of the church is affected.

In his first letter to Corinth (chapter 5) Paul had to command the church to put out a man who had grievously broken the moral law. In his second letter, when commenting on the church's action (2. 5-11) he says, "sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the many; so that contrariwise ye should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up with his overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you to confirm your love toward him".

One purpose of the second letter to the Thessalonians was to prevent a section of the church from continuing as a group of idle busybodies. Paul felt quite free to give the church instruction to have "no company" with those who would not obey his word by letter (he himself worked as a tentmaker as an example to such lazy people), but note his final statement in respect of each, and feel its tender emotion: "and yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (3. 15).

This subject has strong ties with that of next month, "The Prayer Life of the Apostle Paul", in which it will be found that many of his prayers were directly concerned with the condition of the churches of God, which were dear to him. Such prayers are just as necessary today. May we all have Paul's strong desire for the continuance of the present testimony on the pattern of the New Testament teaching and have the grace to correct wrong behaviour in a spirit of tender emotion and not of harshness.

*C. L. Prasher*

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Paul was not content to know that God had richly blessed his ministry in the planting of churches of God in Asia, Macedonia and Achaia. His concern was for their growth in the Faith. He indicated this in his parting words to the elders of Ephesus at Miletus. "And now I commend you to God, and to the

word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20: 32). The condition of the saints would largely depend on the elders as they fed the church of God, which He purchased with His blood [2]. This growth would be watered by Paul's supplications for them, an experience of which he speaks in all his epistles. Like his Master he must have spent many long hours with tears, in supplication for the disciples. By his letter to the Galatians he powerfully opposed the attempts of false teachers to pervert the gospel of Christ. We owe much to his crystal clear words which he used in that letter, as he earnestly sought to free the minds of the saints and the preaching of the message from any shackles that men would have made. Not only in teaching did he abound, but in example also, he showed his practical care for the saints in many ways, sometimes working daily with his hands, as he did **in** Corinth **in** the home of Priscilla and Aquila. **R. Shaw**

**From** Liverpool. —The word "anxiety" (care, A. V. ) indicates a compassion, a responsibility for the churches of God (2 Corinthians 11. 28). He could say (verse 29), "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is made to stumble, and I burn not?" His sensitive spirit would respond to the condition of the saints. The fear of what he might find when he visited them caused him to write as he did to the saints at Corinth (2 Corinthians 12. 19-21).

One of the things we should ever guard against is factions (A. V. (strifes): (Greek *Erithia*, "derived **from** *Erithos*, a hireling; hence the meaning of seeking to win followers"—Vine). Factions will result in parties or cliques. We know that these are the works of the flesh (Galatians 5. 19). In Galatians 4. 19, 20 we again have a disclosing of the sensitive nature of the apostle. His main desire for them was that Christ be formed in them, and to this end he travailed a second time **on** their behalf. **A. H.**

**From** Vancouver, B. C. —Paul spoke about the condition that God desired in the churches, but he realized that his letters would be disregarded if all he did was to admonish. He made it his business to go to them, discover what was hindering progress and take action. Men who act under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and with the help of prayer can accomplish much more than those who would just speak.

Some say that the maintenance of condition is negative rather than positive. This can never be true. Paul admonished the wrongdoer and sometimes required excommunication, but with a view to restoration. He would not condone keeping an Achan in the camp merely to show mercy or to maintain numbers. Paul aimed for perfection in his admonitions, not as an idealist, but always aware that we must never rest from striving for spiritual progress.

Paul was a strict disciplinarian; but he also possessed a fatherly attitude so necessary in shepherding the wayward and in encouraging the upright. He used discretion as to how he spoke, always taking into consideration the circumstances. When Paul rebuked one church he emphasized that the sin was not only a stigma on them but on all the churches. **J. Pope, J. Bell**

**From Edinburgh.** —Paul uses two figures in showing his love and care for the churches and his concern for their condition. In 1 Corinthians 4. 15, he likens himself to a father, and the church of God in Corinth to his child whom he has begotten through the gospel. He longed to be kind and gracious to them, but, like a father, he could chastize when it was necessary. As he pondered over the condition of Corinth and thought about his proposed visit he realized he would have to exercise parental discipline and this would not be to their mutual joy (2 Corinthians 12. 20). To carry out the judgement of God in their midst would be grievous for them and would cause Paul to mourn. After setting himself forth as a father in 1 Corinthians 4. 15, he adds the words, "Be ye imitators of me". Paul's ways were an example for all the churches. Solomon said that a wise son maketh a glad father, and Paul longed to be glad over his spiritual children.

In 2 Corinthians 11 Paul uses a different figure. He likens the church in Corinth to a bride whom he longed to present as a pure virgin to Christ. He had a high ideal before him for the church in Corinth; his jealousy over them was as the jealousy of God. He feared that as the serpent had been active in the garden of Eden so he would be active in Corinth in corrupting their minds from the simplicity that is toward Christ.

*M. Dyer*

**From Paisley.** —In his life's work as a master builder of churches of God, Paul did not stop at the laying of foundations. He beautified the house of God to dwell in (which house was the aggregate of all such churches) by fashioning the saints in conformity with the will of God. (Galatians 4. 19). Paul excelled in this work and set a high standard of workmanship. He found in the kingdom of God in his day that there is one who seeks to destroy all that God creates for His pleasure and His creatures' benefit. The work of the devil and his minions (the spiritual counterpart of Psalm 74. 3-7) presented Paul with much difficulty and distress as they sought to destroy God's house. In the face of such wanton destruction we learn much from Paul's craftsmanship. Paul, like his Lord, always knew exactly the correct course of action and never shrank from it. He was a man who both knew and did the will of God. Such a man will always inspire those in churches of God to do likewise. In this way the standard of godliness in the house of God is maintained. In seeking to rectify the devil's handiwork it is important to note that Paul's behaviour was directed towards the ultimate good of all concerned, even when pursuing the correct course meant initial sorrow and distress.

*Ian Penn*

## PAUL AND THE CHURCHES OF GOD—

### (1) THEIR CONSTITUTION

**From Toronto, Ont.** —The scripture in Acts 14. 23 raises the question, "Are overseers (elders) required in a city before a church of God may be planted there?" It refers to elders being recognized in every church, and later, in Titus 1. 5, elders in every city. In the early days of the churches, the apostles were the instruments by which new churches were established, and in these churches they then appointed elders. In the present time it is the district oversight in any area that

appoints elders over a new assembly until local overseers are forthcoming. Thus it is not necessary for there to be local overseers recognized before a new church is planted [3].

In Acts 16. 5 and also Acts 2. 47 we read of believers being added to the church daily. Admittedly, these were peculiar times at the beginning of this dispensation and the pattern of continued church constitution and operation is not revealed until the epistles which follow. It is our practice today in churches of God to receive a baptized believer into fellowship only on a Lord's Day morning at the Remembrance meeting when the church is "in church" in the sense of 1 Corinthians 11. 18, where Paul is referring to the gathering for the Lord's supper. A question arises as to whether the practice of daily addition (i. e. at any time other than prior to the Remembrance meeting) would be acceptable today. However, in 1 Corinthians 5. 4, 5, where Paul is also referring to the meeting to "keep the feast", he urges the Corinthian church to put away a fornicator from among them at that time. Is this the pattern that applies today for addition also? [4].

1 Timothy 3. 1-13 deals with the qualifications of overseers (elders) and deacons, very high standards indeed. It is noteworthy that the requirements of a deacon parallel those of bishop, but with two exceptions. Firstly, only elders have the rule over the saints (Hebrews 13. 17) and must give account in a future day, and secondly, only overseers are specifically required to be "apt to teach" (1 Timothy 3. 2). The first elders were not, of necessity, firstly deacons but the principle today would appear to be that a man should first prove himself in the office of a deacon (1 Timothy 3. 10). The primary concern of overseers should be the shepherding of the flock, while that of deacons is the **service** involved in the Lord's work.

*K. Dorricott*

## A WORD STUDY

**Wards descriptive of the scathing remarks to the Lord Jesus on the Cross.**

***They that passed by*** RAILED on Him (A. V. reviled) (Matthew 27. 39; Mark 15. 29).

Blasphemeo: to speak profanely, to rail at, to vilify, especially to speak impiously; derived from Blapto, a primitive verb, probably =to hinder, and by implication=to injure, and Phemi=to make known one's thoughts, to speak. This was done by the crowd, and all that passed by. How sad that the unrepentant malefactor went on to his death doing the same thing (Luke 23. 29)!

**"... *the chief priests* MOCKING Him with *the scribes and the elders*".** (Matthew 27. 41; Mark 15. 31). (A. V. mocking).

Empaizo: to sport, to jest at, to ridicule, to mock, from Paizo=to play like a child (PALS), and EN=in or at. Used only in the Synoptists and almost in every instance of the mockery suffered by the Lord Jesus. The Lord Himself knew full well that this mockery lay before Him (Matthew 20. 19 etc. ). What longsuffering grace on His part, for He had to endure the mockery of the men who held Him prisoner (Luke 22. 63), and of Herod and his soldiers (Luke 23. 11), and of Pilate's soldiers in the praetorium (Matthew 27. 29)!

"And the *rulers* also SCOFFED at Him" (Luke 23. 35, A. V. deride). Ekmukterizo: literally, to hold up the nose in derision, to deride out and out, from ek=from, used intensively, and Mukterizo = to mock, from mukter=the nose. This is how the Pharisees treated the rich teaching of the Lord on one occasion (Luke 16. 14), and how shamefully the rulers derided the Lord on the Cross. How solemn the words of Psalm 2. 4, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: The Lord shall have them in *derision*" (the same Greek word in the Septuagint Version).

"The *robbers* also that were crucified with Him cast upon Him the same REPROACH" (Matthew 27. 44; Mark 15. 32; A. V. reviled). Oneidizo: to reproach, to upbraid, when used in the active voice. This the robbers did! One going deeper in the mire when he railed (blasphemo, see above) on Him, whilst the other, no doubt seeing the superscription, written by Pilate and put on the Cross (John 19. 19, in its fulness from the four evangelists, This is JESUS of NAZARETH, the KING of the Jews'), said, "JESUS, remember me, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom" (R. V. is the correct reading here).

And so, 'One was saved upon the Cross that no man might despair, And only one that no man might presume\*.

A solemn use of the verb Oneidizo in the passive voice is, "If ye are *reproached* for the Name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter 4, 14). For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls" (Hebrews 12. 3, Nestle's Greek translation by Dr. A. Marshall).

*Jas. Martin*

COMMENTS

[1] (Birmingham). —I judge Paul is speaking of his own weakness in 2 Corinthians 11. 29. This is evident in the following verse (30). In this verse he says, "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness". Then he gives an evidence of his weakness, when to escape arrest in Damascus he was let down by the wall in a basket. He gloried in his weakness that the power of Christ might rest upon him, or spread a tabernacle over him (R. V. marg. 12. 9). He was weak in himself but powerful in Christ. This is something for us all to learn.

*J. M.*

[2] (Glasgow, Parkhead). —I think this passage in Acts 20. 28 should be read as given in Dr. Marshall's Greek Interlinear Translation: "The church of God, which He acquired through the blood of His own"; the noun "Son" being understood. This is how I read it long before I saw Dr. Marshall's translation, excellent in many respects.

*J. M.*

[3] (Toronto). —Though churches of God were planted before overseers were recognized and appointed in such churches, yet, I think that in the planting of a church of God the material should be there for the recognition of overseers in due time.

*J. M.*

[4] (**Toronto**). —In 1 Corinthians 5 Paul gives instruction that a man guilty of such sins as are mentioned should be put away when the church is gathered together on the Lord's day, so also we believe addition to the church should take place on that day. *J. M.*

### QUESTION AND ANSWER

**Question from Toronto, Ont.** —Allowing for circumstance which would cause him to be humbled, in what sense could we understand that God would humble Paul (2 Corinthians 12. 21)?

**Answer:** Paul would be humbled if he saw the saints in Corinth involved in such sins as those of uncleanness, fornication and lasciviousness, as many of them were in their unconverted days. Any father is humbled if his sons are involved in evil conduct which brings a public disgrace upon him and his children. Any father knows the difference between having a wise son and a foolish one. Even so it was with Paul and other servants of Christ. *J. M.*

### NOTES ON THE PSALMS

#### PSALM 41

These verses show us a different David from him who sat in the chamber over the gate of Mahanaim, when, after hearing of the death of Absalom in his sin, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18. 33). His weeping and his words led Joab, his nephew and captain of the host of Israel, to rebuke him, that his words about Absalom had shamed the faces of all his servants which had saved his life and the lives of his sons and daughters and others, in that David loved them that hated him, and hated them that loved him (2 Samuel 18. 32—19. 8). David wrote differently in this psalm of God's mercy, in that He had raised him up. We can see the great difference between parental affection in 2 Samuel chapters 18 and 19 and what was the proper attitude for David as king of Israel to take. God delighted in David and did not allow the enemy to triumph over him, but upheld him in his integrity, and set him before His face **for ever.**

"Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel,  
From everlasting and to everlasting.  
Amen, and Amen" (verse 13).

This is a fitting word of praise by David, who had escaped the sword of Absalom, to Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had raised him to be king of His people. He was restored again to the throne of his people. We too say with David, "Blessed be the LORD from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, " and Amen. *J.M.*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

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## EDITORIAL

We know that some of Paul's epistles were written in prison, for in them he refers to his bonds. The wonderfully rich letters to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians are in this group (Ephesians 3. 1, 4. 1; Philippians 1. 7; Colossians 4. 10). By the grace of God Paul triumphed over adverse circumstances and the physical restraint had the effect of increasing his mental activity. In confinement there was more opportunity for meditation, the results of which are evident in his letters: we refer to such gems as Ephesians 1, Philippians 2. 1-11 and Colossians 1. 9-23. The depth and precision of these passages delight us each time we read them as new facets of the beauty and worth of the Lord Jesus are brought before us.

It is significant that in these epistles great theological passages often take the form of prayers (Ephesians 1. 15-23, 3. 14-21; Colossians 1. 9-23). Even while considering the unsearchable riches of Christ, Paul's intense desire was that the saints everywhere should learn with him divine truths that would deepen their spiritual lives (Ephesians 3. 14—4. 3). Thus Paul records his own supplications, he also exhorts the saints to give themselves to prayer and asks them to pray for him. It seems that he left the question of his release from prison in God's hands, for he never suggested it as a subject for the prayers of the saints, but he desired prayer for blessing upon the gospel message (Ephesians 6. 19, 20).

The apostle must have spent much of his prison life upon his knees in supplication on behalf of the churches of God. A most descriptive word used in this connexion is "strive" (Colossians 2. 1, 2). The Greek word is *agonizomai*, which implies struggle, toil and sometimes suffering. It originally referred to the extreme efforts of the athlete in the Greek games, striving to obtain the crown of laurel awarded to the victor. The same word is used about Epaphras (Colossians 4. 12, 13) who, in this service for the churches of God was a faithful imitator of Paul. Our word "agonize" is similar in form and meaning to this Greek word, from which it is derived.

Thanksgiving also had a major place in Paul's prayers (Ephesians 1. 16; Philippians 1. 3; Colossians 1. 3). He had learnt the secret of contentment in adversity, even to the extent of rejoicing and encouraging others to rejoice. Paul was intensely aware of the magnitude of the spiritual wealth he had received by grace, dwarfing his prison discomforts into insignificance and drawing forth outstanding hymns of praise (Ephesians 1. 3-14; Colossians 1. 12-18).

L. B.

**PAUL THE APOSTLE**  
**A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT**  
**THE PRAYER LIFE OF PAUL**

**From Vancouver, B. C.** — Paul's first prayer is mentioned in Acts 9. 11. It was a prayer of one in need of guidance and also of one with a thankful heart. From Acts 20 we could deduce that Paul knew how to pray well in public; he also cared about the needs of others as well as his own and commended his fellow-saints to the Lord. This chapter reveals Paul's reverence when he prayed by the fact that he kneeled. Reverence is of prime importance in prayer. Paul's joy in prayer is mentioned in Philippians 1. So Paul knew what it was to pray both in joy and in tears. Both have their place in a Christian's life.

Another necessity in prayer, as Paul sees it, is striving. Prayer is not just words rolling off the tongue, but the sincere desire and out-pouring of the heart. We must wrestle like Jacob in our prayer to God.

As if to attempt to instil the value of importunate prayer into those at Thessalonica, Paul urges them to "pray without ceasing". We can almost see him with a prayer on his lips as he writes, that this may come to pass in each heart. Paul considered that one cannot pray too often, and he says "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ".

7. *Bell, J. Pope*

**From Edinburgh.** — "Brethren be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ". So said Paul who, like his Master, was a man of prayer, whether we think of him in his private life, and also with his brethren, or in exhortation to prayer and supplication.

As far as he himself is concerned, the first mention of his praying was just after he had been saved on the Damascus road. From that day till the day of his departure he was one who continued steadfastly in prayer (Colossians 4. 2). Not only did he pray, but did so night and day (2 Timothy 1. 3). His unceasing care for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11. 28) sprang from his true shepherd character, which must often have caused him to bow his knees unto the Father (Ephesians 3. 14). In his prayers his desire (Ephesians 3. 15-17) was also mingled with thanksgiving (Philippians 1. 3), making mention of the saints (Ephesians 1. 16); and the fact that he strove in prayer (Colossians 2. 1) is not left out.

On the sabbath in Philippi they went out to a place which they deemed was a place of prayer (Acts 16. 13) [3]. The result was that Lydia and her household were saved and baptized, and later also, the jailer and his household. At Miletus, after having addressed the Ephesian elders, "he kneeled down, and prayed with them all" (Acts 20. 36). After his exhortation and prayer, they wept most of all because they would not see him again.

Paul's exhortations to prayer include, "Brethren pray for us" (2 Thessalonians 3. 1), "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5. 17). It is Paul who speaks of "supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings... for all men" (1 Timothy 2. 1).

*R. Fisher*

**From Derby.** —Paul prayed in Acts 9. 11, but the words of this prayer are not recorded. He had a vision concerning Ananias coming in and laying his hands on him that he might restore his sight. It is when we are in prayer that God reveals His purposes for us.

Paul emphasizes the effectual power of continual prayer (1 Thessalonians 5. 17; Ephesians 6. 18). He says we must be steadfast in prayer (Romans 12. 12) and continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving (Colossians 4. 2).

For Paul to write such things about the power of prayer he must have known its value in his own experience. His concern for the churches caused him to engage in much prayer to God (1 Thessalonians I. 2; Colossians 1. 9).

*A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway*

### EXTRACTS

**From Hamilton.** —The prayer in Acts 20 was a prayer in every way suited to the occasion. It was a joint prayer: he not only prayed for the overseers, but prayed with them. In praying with those of Ephesus he was showing them an example, that they might follow a like pattern of petition when he was gone. This prayer was a humble, reverent prayer. This was expressed by the posture they used. He kneeled down and prayed with them; the gesture in prayer here is significant both of adoration and of petition (see also Ephesians 3. 14). This prayer was a prayer after his address to the elders. He prayed that God would enable the elders to discharge faithfully the great trust reposed in them. He prayed for the flock and it was a parting prayer, with all the feeling that would last when they were separated (compare Genesis 31. 49).

Philippians 1. 3, 4 reveals to us Paul's thoughtfulness for the saints at Philippi. The more he thought the more he spoke of them and was delighted to hear them highly spoken of. At Philippi he was maltreated; there he was scourged and put in the stocks, yet he remembers the Philippians with joy.

The best remembrance of our beloved ones is to remember them at the throne of grace, "always in every prayer of mine for you all" was Paul's example (Philippians 1. 4, A. V. ).

Thanksgiving must have a part in every prayer; whatsoever is the matter of our rejoicing ought to be the matter of our thanksgiving.

*Andrew A. Collington*

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —Paul's own words fittingly summarize his life, "In everything give thanks" and "Pray without ceasing".

The prayer life of Paul, when did it begin? Samuel's began in the tabernacle in Shiloh, Paul's prayer life did not begin at his conversion. Prayer was no new thing to him when he knelt in prayer in the house of Judas in Damascus before Ananias came to him: albeit his prayers from then on had new meaning, new direction (through the Lord Jesus as Advocate), and new power [1]. We might almost say that he had a birthright to prayer, in contrast to Gentiles who sought and felt after God, all the while bowing down to idols, the work of their own hands. His awareness of the God of Israel would develop and deepen as he saw the spiritual exercises of his parents, and the religious observances in the synagogue of Tarsus, until prayer became natural to him [2].

Paul prayed for Jews; he prayed also for Gentiles, and he practised what he preached. He prayed for all men (1 Timothy 2. 1, 2). He could also say that he was "pure from the blood of all men".

*J. Peddie*

**From Southport.** —There can be little doubt that the strict upbringing of Saul as a Pharisee would include the practice of prayer. It might well have been "prayer within himself" and as far from true prayer as his actions were from true living when he thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 26. 9) [4]. But we may be sure that he never prayed before as he did during the three days following his conversion. In those prayers, although physically blind, he was graciously given a heavenly vision in which he saw the visit of Ananias to restore his sight. From that time we think that Paul frequently resorted to intense prayer, not as a formality, but talking to and with God about his service for the Lord. Between his conversion on the Damascus road and his leaving Damascus for Jerusalem three years elapsed (Galatians 1. 18) and it seems that he spent the greater part of that period alone with God in the Arabian desert (Galatians 1. 17). There he was in constant communion with God, being prepared for the life of suffering to which God had called him (Acts 9. 15-16). This then would be the foundation of his prayers of which we have a glimpse in Philippians 1. 3-4, indicating that both the furtherance of the gospel and those reached by the gospel were his whole life, even including those who were not saved directly through his ministry (Colossians 2. 1). That much of this prayer was on his knees may be deduced from Acts 20. 36-38 and Ephesians 3. 14. We also think that his prayers, and particularly those in public, were "in the Spirit" and "with the understanding" (1 Corinthians 14. 15), but his private prayer may at times have been a "waiting on God" (Romans 8. 26-27) for guidance in the way he should go.

A man who advocated "pray without ceasing", that "men pray everywhere", "pray one for another" and "pray for us" may well be described as a man of prayer.

*L. Jones*

**From Glasgow (Goran and Partick).** —Paul was a changed man when he prayed in the house of Judas at Damascus. His inner conflict drove him to prayer. With Paul, His chosen vessel, God purposed to open a door of faith unto the Gentiles.

The next time we read of Paul praying, his heart had been enlarged to care for the churches of God in Galatia (Acts 14. 23). Then the call to help in Macedonia brought Paul and Silas to Philippi, where they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of the Lord Jesus. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them. We may be sure the prisoners had never heard the like. But God was listening. The jailer awakened and under conviction realized his need to be saved. God wrought no less a miracle in the heart of the jailer than by the release of Paul and Silas.

So Paul could thank God for all his remembrance of those Philippians. The substance of his prayer on their behalf is contained in Philippians 1. 9-11. Paul, again in bonds, prayed that they might "approve the things that are excellent". He exhorts the Philippians to make their requests known to God, and experience, as doubtless Paul had often done, the peace of God guarding their hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

*Eric Archibald*

**From Atherton.** —Prayer filled the apostle's life and service. After the Lord's, Paul's example is of the highest order. He reveals clearly that blessing resulted as he sought the Lord constantly. Prayer was real to him. It was his "vital breath" and "native air".

Witness him praying with the elders of Ephesus after that remarkable discourse (Acts 20. 18-36). See him also praying with men, women and children (Acts 21. 5). In the jail he prayed with Silas (Acts 16. 25). His example teaches us how essential prayer is in the Christian life. He prayed with the saints. He prayed for the saints, as so many of his epistles testify in their opening words.

Paul cites the double intercession of the Lord Jesus "who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8. 34) and that of the Spirit who "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (8. 26-27).

*R. A. Jones, G. A. J.*

**From Methil.** —"The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15. 29). The wicked life of Paul had been transformed to a righteous life, not by his own doing, but by divine intervention. From consenting to Stephen's death and laying waste the church (Acts 8. 1-3), Paul is found in Damascus in prayer; a chosen vessel of the Lord to bear His Name, to Gentiles, kings and the people of Israel.

What Paul accomplished in his new life, he did through prayer, and in fellowship with his brethren. He exhorted them to pray for him in his labours, "Brethren pray for us" (1 Thessalonians 5. 25), also "that the word of the Lord may run and be glorified" (2 Thessalonians 3. 1), also "that God may open unto us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4. 3). He places great value upon prayer, yet he could say, "We know not how to pray as we ought" (Romans 8. 26).

The condition of the people of God was much upon his heart. To those in Philippi he wrote, "I long after you all... and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more..." (Philippians 1. 8, 9), and to those in Colossae, that they might "be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Colossians 1. 9). Philemon, his fellow-worker, and many others, he made mention of in his prayers.

The earnestness with which Paul prayed is worthy of emulation. What he asked from others he did himself; "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5. 17). "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God", "with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6. 18).

Paul, in his letter to the Romans (15. 30) asked that they with him might strive (be agonized) together in prayer. The saints, even those who had never seen Paul in the flesh, knew that he was remembering them before God (Colossians 2. 1-3). We too can have fellowship in prayer with all our brethren.

*Iain T. H. Hunter*

**From Denmark Hill,** London. —Paul was from the day of his conversion to the day of his death pre-eminently a man of prayer. In Acts 9. 11 we have the simple statement by God to his servant Ananias concerning Paul, "... for behold, he prayeth". God took note that the apostle was now praying. He whose sight was restored would yet give through the gospel light to the heathen Gentiles in their darkness. (See 2 Corinthians 4. 3-6).

In Acts 20. 17-38 is recorded the incident in which he reminds the elders from Ephesus at Miletus how he had served God. Having left the charge with them to follow his example of service to God he leads them all in prayer to God, for their comfort, courage and consolation. Surely it was for all these things. It was more. In his farewell the apostle kneeled down and prayed with them all (See also Ephesians 3. 14).

The apostle Paul agonized, strove and wrestled in prayer not only for the disciples he knew, but for those also who had never seen him (Colossians 2. 1-3). He showed the largeness and unselfishness of his heart.

It could be truly said of the apostle, as was said of Jacob, "Thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Genesis 32. 28).

*R. F. Robertson*

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —Ananias was instructed by the Lord to go to the house of Judas and seek one, Saul of Tarsus, "for behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9. 11). This was something that was to characterize the life of Paul. In the three days following his conversion, Paul had not tasted food nor drink.

Paul exhorted the church at Thessalonica to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5. 17). He outlined his plan of prayer for those in the house of God to Timothy (1 Timothy 2. 1, 2), that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgiving were to be made for all men. The apostle knew the condition of the world, he knew what saints would have to endure and he exhorted them to pray for those that rule in the world, "that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (1 Timothy 2. 2). Like his Master, Paul was a man who was in constant prayer.

In 2 Corinthians 12. 8, 9 Paul besought the Lord thrice that the thorn might be removed from him, but God's answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee". Prayer is essential to the Christian and no one realized it more than the apostle Paul. He knew the spiritual man was dependent on prayer as the physical is dependent on breath. He remembered all the churches of God in his prayers. Certain individuals also were constantly in his mind, Timothy, Titus and Philemon were but a few of those whom we read of who were always in his thoughts. Well he knew what lay ahead of them, conflict with false brethren, false teachings and many temptations, which could only be withstood by prayer.

In Acts 20. 36 we read, "He kneeled down, and prayed with them all", and in Acts 21. 5, "kneeling down on the beach, we prayed". The place was no hindrance to Paul praying on what was to be his last visit to the saints there.

Paul, almost without exception, begins his epistles by telling the churches of his prayers for them, and usually ends by requesting their prayers for him and his fellow-workers.

*J. M. W.*

**From** Liverpool. —One of the most important scriptures in relation to prayer is found in Ephesians 6. 18, "With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints". These are essential exercises of the Christian soldier.

In Acts 20, when Paul was taking leave of the elders and commending them to God and to the word of His grace, he kneeled and prayed with them. We read again of this kneeling in Ephesians 3. 14 and we are told for what he prayed. Likewise in Colossians 1. 9 other saints are the subjects of his prayers. Paul asked the saints to pray for him (see Colossians 4. 3).

Prayer and thanksgiving should always be linked (see Philippians 4. 6 and 1 Timothy 2. 1). He knew God's will that there should be steadfast continuance in prayer, and there should be watching with thanksgiving.

His understanding of the gracious ministration of the Spirit in prayer is revealed in Romans 8. 26, 27, "We know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and . . . He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God".

*F. Jones, AM.*

**From** Cardiff. —We considered the two prayers in Ephesians 1 and 3. It was said that these may have been the greatest outpourings of the soul that ever came from the lips of a human being, the Lord Jesus Christ being the only exception. The first prayer was addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the second to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle prayed that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ would give to the saints a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, and that the eyes of their hearts be enlightened to know the wonderful things about Him.

He also prayed that God would grant them, according to the riches of His glory, that they might be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ might dwell in their hearts through faith to the end that they being rooted and grounded in love should be strong to apprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that they might be filled unto all the fulness of God.

These were not impromptu prayers, they represent the whole life's work of the apostle Paul, who was chosen of God to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

## COMMENTS

[1] (**Glasgow, Parkhead**). —I am of the opinion that we should stop using such words as "the prayer life of Paul" as though it was something different from Christian life in general.

I think what is said here about Paul praying prior to his conversion, as though God listened to any prayers he made when he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Timothy 1. 13) is simply not true.

God will not hear the prayers of such as are malignant haters of Christ and His saints, as Saul was.

*J. M.*

[2] (**Glasgow, Parkhead**). "Until prayer became natural to him", this could be misunderstood, see paper from Southport.

*J. M.*

[3] (**Edinburgh**). It is unlikely that Paul and his companions went to the riverside at Philippi in order to pray. There was probably no synagogue in the city, so they went to the place where they expected to find Jews and proselytes and give them the first opportunity of hearing the gospel. It was common for Jews in foreign cities to meet by the riverside (See Psalm 137).

*L. B.*

[4] (**Southport**) See Comment [1]. I agree with these remarks of our friends.

"How many people say their prayers, but yet who never pray;

Because they know not Him who is the Life, the Truth, the Way".

See John 14. 6.

*J. M.*

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question from Denmark Hill, London.** —In view of such scriptures as Acts 21. 5 and Psalm 95. 6 could some light be given as to suitable times for collective kneeling in prayer? Were these special circumstances? Is such a mode of worship only fitting at a formal type of gathering not known collectively among us today, apart from its use at home?

Answer: I am inclined to think that the occasions of kneeling collectively, as in Acts 20. 36 and 21. 5, were special occasions when there was deep emotion at the partings, and the nearness of God to them in the circumstances was very much realized. The experience of David and Israel in Psalm 95 was at that time also very special, as they were about to go to the house of Abinadab on the hill to bring up the Ark of the covenant to Zion. David did not wish Israel to fail in the great opportunity that lay before them; they were in the circumstances not to harden their hearts. See the application of David's words in Hebrews 3. The prostration of the body was much more common in Old Testament times. Now the worship of God is in spirit and truth, as the Lord said (John 4. 23, 24). The present mode of the brother rising to pray and the rest of the assembly remaining seated, yet in a devout attitude, is quite proper. Private prayer is comely on one's knees.

*J. M.*

## PSALM 42

We come now to Book II of the Psalms, of which there are five books. In this respect of being divided into five books, they are like the Book of Law which is also divided into five books. All the psalms in the first book were written by David, with the exception of Psalms 1, 10 and 33, which have no heading. Psalm 2 also has no heading, but from Acts 4. 25, 26, in which a portion of this psalm is quoted, we learn that in it the LORD spoke by the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David. So following this ruling in Book I of the Psalms, we may be led to conclude that all the psalms in the first book came through David.

Book II of the Psalms begins with psalms of the sons of Korah, Psalms 42-49. At the time of the rebellion of Korah of the Levites and Dathan and Abiram, who were Reubenites (Numbers 16), we are told that, though the earth swallowed up Korah, Dathan and Abiram and they went down alive into the pit (Hebrew, *Sheol*, Hell) (verses 30, 33), "the sons of Korah died not" (Numbers 26. 11). Samuel the prophet was of the sons of Korah, and his son Joel was the father of Heman the singer (1 Chronicles 6. 33); Heman with Asaph and Ethan (Jeduthan) formed the triumvirate of chief singers of the three branches of the Levites, Kohath, Gershon and Merari. These psalms of the sons of Korah are most precious and tell of the longings of men after God, and of appearing before Him in His house (42, 43); concerning the Messiah the King and Ruler of God's people (45); of God's protecting and delivering power, and the ceasing of war in millennial peace (46, 47); and of the greatness and glory of the city of God, a city which has known greater destructions by God's enemies than any city on earth (48); and finally, a psalm to all the inhabitants of the earth as to the hopelessness of a mere man being a redeemer of his brother, and of man's shortlived possession of wealth and property; for when he dies he will carry nothing away.

The evil course followed by Korah had no effect on his sons, and it may well be that Samuel's godly life was a great blessing to his grandchildren.

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks,

So panteth my soul after Thee, O God.

My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:

When shall I come and appear before God?" (verses 1, 2).

The sons of Korah use the thirsty hart, no doubt in the heat of summer when many of the brooks of the land were dried up, panting or braying for water. I see nothing in the psalm to encourage the thought that the hart was fleeing from pursuers as the hymn writer suggests in the words.

"As pants the hart for cooling streams,

When heated in the chase".

The thought in "panteth" just means that it longed for water to drink, and its supply of drinking water was the water brooks. This thirst of the hart is used by the psalm-writers to describe the thirst of their soul after God, a thirst which only God could meet, the longing of men after the living God, and the writers' coming to God's house and appearing before God. This was what was before the devout Israelite, when three times a year he came to appear before God, (1) at the feast of unleavened bread during which the sheaf of firstfruits was

offered, (2) at the feast of harvest (Pentecost), and (3) at the feast of ingathering (Tabernacles) (Exodus 23. 14-17). The Levites and Levitical singers would be at the house of God more frequently in their courses of service and singing.

"My tears have been my meat day and night,  
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?  
These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,  
How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,  
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping the  
holyday\*" (verses 3, 4).

It is evident that in Israel there were those who had no thirst after God, and whose question, "Where is thy God?", was a heart-break to the devout men whose desires were for the living God. It has always been so. Paul makes this clear in Romans 9. 6-8, where he says, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham's seed, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed". Again Paul says, "What if some were without faith? shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God? God forbid" (Romans 3. 3, 4). After the Lord's sowing came the sowing of the devil, and the wheat and the tares were to be allowed to grow together till the harvest (Matthew 13). Not only have there been both kinds in the world but also in Israel, for among God's people there were those who were gathered at God's house to do His will, and there were those who thought that their own house was more important to them and they remained at home. Is it not so now among God's children, and even in the Fellowship there are those who are regular attenders, and those who come on occasions, and some are rarely seen at all? Those who remained at home were (and still are) a grief to such as gather together to do God's will.

The writer pours out his soul within him as he remembers these, and he remembers also the occasion when he was at God's house, how he went with the throng of equally devout persons as himself. The R. V. gives "led them", but the A. V. gives "went with them". The verb "went" here means "to walk gently" or "softly", such a mode of procession to the house of God as became godly people, not of band-playing and din of many fleshly processions, for the flesh ever likes to make a noise. The devout people of old went softly with the voice of joy and praise, "a multitude keeping holyday". Alas, we live in a time when what was once "holyday" is changed into "holiday". In the word it is just a change of "y" into "i", but it means vastly more than that with many; it is with such a day with no God as the objective in the day, a day entirely for themselves and for fleshly enjoyment, but no refreshment, that God alone can give, to the human spirit. It was this spiritual joy that the writer of the psalm sought after.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
And why art thou disquieted within me?  
Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him  
For the health of His countenance" (verse 5).

To be "cast down" according to R. V. and A. V. marginal readings is in the Hebrew to be "bowed down". This the godly man will ever be as he looks down; the conduct of others will cause him disquiet. Indeed, in many things he will not be satisfied even with himself. Introspection in his own case will not be without its sorrow. In whom will he find comfort and satisfaction? The answer is in what this psalmist said to his soul, "Hope thou in God". If we are to be free from the discouragements and alarms of things beneath, we shall have to obey the apostle's exhortation to set our mind "on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Colossians 3. 2). It was Paul the prisoner of Rome who wrote these words. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest men who ever lived, and he had been in jail for years, both in Caesarea and Rome, through the heartlessness of the Jews. But heaven above was open to him, and from thence his spirit drew its comfort, whilst his flesh suffered the afflictions and restrictions of men. The believer cannot live without hope, and now abide faith, hope and love, the three pillars which uphold spiritual life. The psalmist in his encouragement to his soul to hope in God assures himself that he would yet praise God for the health of His countenance. We nearly always show health in our face, and if God's face is shining on us, then we shall show the health of His countenance in our countenance. The question is, which way are we facing, toward God or away from Him? The sunshine of God is health to our spirits as sunshine gives health to our bodies.

"O my God, my soul is cast down within me.

Therefore do I remember Thee from the land of Jordan,

And the Hermons, from the hill Mizar.

Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts:

All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me" (verses 6, 7).

Here the writer of the psalm refers again in his speaking to God to the fact that his soul was cast down within him, but in this state he would remember God who was his only refuge and support. Three places are mentioned in which he remembered God: (1) from the land of Jordan, (2) from the Hermons, and (3) from the hill Mizar. No doubt these places are to be thought of as literal places in which the writer remembered God, but they may also be thought of as places which produced different feelings within him. The land of Jordan was low country stretching from the sea of Galilee, which is 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean sea, to the Dead sea, which is 1, 292 feet below sea level. In contrast to the low country are the Hermons, the high peaks in Lebanon to the north of the land of Caanan, on which heights elevated thoughts and feelings might fill the mind. Then there is the little hill called Mizar in the Lebanon range, on which thoughts of less elevation might fill the mind. Whether this difference in thought and feeling is implied in the different places, high, low and moderate, it may be difficult to say, but we come to something more dreadful and alarming in what is said about the river Jordan, which had to be crossed by those who dwelt on the east side of the river, if they wished to go to the house of God to appear before God.

We are told that the "Jordan overfloweth **all its banks** all the **time of harvest**" (Joshua 3. 15). In **Jeremiah 12. 5** the LORD asks, "Though in a land of **peace** thou art **secure**, yet how wilt thou do in the **pride** (swelling) of Jordan?" No doubt the overflowing of the Jordan, which came about by the thawing of the snows of Hermon in the north, was God's protection in nature for the tribes of Israel when they went to **keep** the three **feasts**, already referred to, for those **feasts were** in the time of harvest; but the flood waters of Jordan were a **menace** to all who had chosen to live on the **east side** of the **river**. The waterspouts were not such as waterspouts at sea, when the thick clouds **make** contact with the **sea** water, but were the cataracts of the river. The Hebrew word for waterspout (TSINNUWR) means to be hollow as a culvert or gutter and no doubt shows the **effect** of the rushing water over the rocks and so forth during the course of **centuries**. The **writer speaks** of the noise of the **cataracts**, the thunder of which was **sufficient** to **strike** terror in all who would **seek** to cross at the **time** of flooding. But this writer speaks of his **experience** in crossing when he says, "All Thy **waves** and Thy **billows** are gone over me". No doubt there is a typical **reference** here to the Lord as **He** entered into death, of which the **river** Jordan is a type, and has **been** so regarded for a long time. The Lord **set His face** to reach God through death's dark waters, and **not** to go to heaven apart from facing these. It had of course a **literal meaning** for all the devout Israelites who sought to cross the **river** at the time of the feasts. In the cataracts, the depths above are thought of as calling to the depths below; the depths of each were **measured** by the **same** flood-waters.

"Yet the Lord will command **His** lovingkindness in the day-time,  
And in the night **His** song shall be with me,  
Even a prayer unto the God of my life" (verse 8).

Though the Lord acts as Watchman when we are asleep, and also gives to **His** beloved in sleep (Psalm 127. 1, 2, Mg. ), yet **He** commands **His** lovingkindness in the **day-time** so that we may see **His** merciful working, and that in the night we may sing our song in a prayer to **Him** who is the God of our life. It is a joyous **experience** by night to sing quietly our song to **Him**, who has an **ear** for those who sing while others sleep (Psalm 134. 1; 1 Chronicles 9. 33).

*J. M.*

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

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## EDITORIAL

Valuable as the dictionary is, it sometimes fails the Bible student. In the study of the Scriptures we are not always dealing with the present-day meanings of words, so that in order to understand the Bible correctly we need to know what the translators understood by the words they used.

Against the word "ensample" the Concise Oxford Dictionary has: "(Archaic) = EXAMPLE", thus indicating that "example" is the modern word, "ensample" having passed out of use. But the former has another meaning, thus lack of precision results in modern versions where it is used in place of "ensample", the word which occurs in the Revised and Authorized Versions. An example is a single specimen typical of the rest of its kind, whereas an ensample is a pattern suitable for copying. The two words represent distinct ideas, but can often refer to different aspects of the same thing.

"Ensample" occurs seven times in the Revised Version, six of these translate the Greek word *tupos* (Philippians 3. 17; 1 Thessalonians 1. 7; 2 Thessalonians 3. 9; 1 Timothy 4. 12; Titus 2. 7; 1 Peter 5. 3). It is used in the sense that the persons referred to are, or should be, patterns to others in their manner of life. In other contexts the same Greek word is translated differently. In 1 Corinthians 10. 6 it is rendered "example" in preference to "ensample" as the experiences of Israel are warnings to be heeded by us, not patterns to be followed. "Ensample" also occurs in 1 Timothy 1. 16, where the Greek word is *hupotupos*, an outline or sketch, in this instance used metaphorically.

We trust that these notes make it clear that in this month's study we are considering the apostle Paul, not as an outstanding example of a suffering saint, which nevertheless he undoubtedly was, but primarily as a pattern in his sufferings for all saints to follow.

L. B.

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT AN ENSAMPLE OF GOD'S PURPOSE IN SUFFERING

**From Glasgow (Parkhead).** —From earliest times men of God have been different from men in general and have thereby incurred unpopularity: Joseph, Elijah, Jeremiah and Daniel are examples. Usually they had to speak against the ways of men and this brought opposition, leading to persecution. Similarly, Paul was called to suffer because he preached repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus. By nature he was a man of passion (Acts 26. 11) which grace alone could and did change (Acts 9. 16). His sufferings for the sake of the Name taught him something of the sufferings of Christ at the hands of men. The things of God were therefore enhanced in value in Paul's

eyes. He did **not expect to be popular in a world which had rejected Christ**. He **expected no sympathy from the Jews**, in whose eyes he was a **turncoat**. But he **must have been very disappointed when the Galatians and Corinthians whom he had led to Christ caused him sorrow of heart**. From whatever **quarter his sufferings came and however acute**, they were for the **Lord and in view of the glory to follow**. Like **Moses**, he **accounted the reproach of Christ greater riches than earthly treasure**, for he looked **unto the recompense of reward**. A comparison of **Acts 26. 11 with 2 Corinthians 10. 1-18** shows the **effect on him of his experiences**. *J. J. P.*

From Birmingham. —One of **God's purposes in Paul's sufferings was to prevent him from glorying in the flesh**. Paul **had much to boast about in this world which might have puffed him up and destroyed his service for Christ**. **Ananias was not only told that Paul was a chosen vessel, but how many things he must suffer**.

Paul's **suffering from the thorn in the flesh seemed to be one of his greatest trials, so he besought the Lord thrice to take it away**. He felt that it greatly hindered his **service, but it was necessary to keep him humble because of the greatness of the revelations he had received, lest he should become exalted above measure**. Besides, he was **oppressed greatly by his anxiety for all the churches**.

We **wondered whether the man Paul mentioned who was caught up to the third heaven was Paul himself [1]**.

We should **take to ourselves the example of Paul and Silas who, as they suffered in prison, were praying and singing praises to God, thus showing that they found joy in suffering for His sake**.

*D. P. Brown*

From Whitehills and Macduff. —Of his hardships Paul said, "**I endure all things for the elect's sake**" (2 Timothy 2. 10). His behaviour when **under severe trial had a great effect upon the saints**. He was **given to understand from the beginning that he would know suffering and distress for the sake of the Name, and his life is an impressive record of hardships and suffering**. From time to time he **writes to reassure the saints and to tell them that his suffering is for their encouragement and benefit**. "**Faint not at my tribulations for you, which are your glory**" he told the Ephesians (3. 13), and he **sent Timothy to Thessalonica to reassure the saints there, "that no man be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that hereunto we are appointed"** (1 Thessalonians 3. 3). In Paul is **demonstrated the fact that, "as the sufferings of Christ abound unto us, even so our comfort also aboundeth through Christ"** (2 Corinthians 1. 5). He **said he was weighed down exceedingly beyond his power, insomuch that he despaired even of life, but he trusted in God, which raiseth the dead, who delivered him out of so great a death, and will deliver** (2 Corinthians 1. 8-10). What Paul **depicts of himself in 2 Corinthians 11 and 12 would daunt the spirit of a man, if he did not have strength and grace from God**. The trials and sufferings **seem more than a man could bear and are the more impressive when one thinks of the travelling, preaching, writing, and comforting of others that went on at the same time**.

The saints sought to save him from suffering but he declared, "**I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course**" (Acts 20. 24). He is the **pattern for others, and his**

faith and steadfastness in extremes of adversity command the attention and emulation of other disciples. It was enough for him to do his Lord's will, but he also said, "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him" (2 Timothy 2. 12), for he looked to the recompense.

It was enough for Paul that his Lord should be glorified in him, and that the work should make progress and the saints should be encouraged.

*A. B. R.*

#### EXTRACTS

**From Methil.** —In our consideration of this subject we thought first of all of why Paul suffered. From Acts 9. 16 it was quite evident that, though possibly not at this time revealed to Paul, it was clearly God's mind that he should suffer many things for the sake of the Name of Christ. Paul was destined to endure many things; this was a lifelong experience. This word is the same as that used by Mark in relation to the Lord Jesus and His sufferings (Mark 8. 31, 9. 12).

Paul was now a Christian, and as such he must suffer (2 Timothy 3. 10-12). This he learned the more as he journeyed through life. He had had a great future before him in the world, but this could never be measured alongside what he would gain in choosing Christ, who Himself suffered even unto death (Philippians 3. 8).

In 2 Corinthians 11. 24-27 the apostle gives a striking catalogue of some of the sufferings that he had passed through at the hands of men. Possibly the worst of these was his stoning at Lystra (Acts 14. 19).

Again in 2 Timothy 3. 11 he refers to some of the sufferings that he endured, and tells how that the Lord delivered him out of them all. Does this not reveal the true sense of fellowship that existed between Paul and his Master? In all his sufferings that he was called upon to endure the Lord stood by him and so he was delivered.

*A. R. Smith*

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —In Philippi's jail (Acts 16), with feet fast in the stocks, his back bleeding from many stripes, the apostle had to undergo much pain that God's purpose could be wrought; that a rough jailor could be brought, humbled and trembling, to ask what he must do to be saved. Let us think of the great change between his being cast into the inner prison and his sitting down to meat with the saved jailor.

In the hour of writing his first letter to the Corinthian saints (see chapter 4) he wrote of the apostles being actually hungry and thirsty and naked, of their being buffeted, and having no certain dwelling place, and working with their own hands. That would be more than enough for us, yet the apostle had to bear with revilings and with persecutions as well. His aim in disclosing these personal afflictions was not to bring him glory but rather to admonish his readers not to be puffed up, not to be slothful in their work for the Lord. And in order that he himself should not be exalted overmuch, the Lord allowed Satan to give him a thorn in the flesh. We must also remember that his anxiety for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11. 28) was mental **suffering** to him, and that daily.

*Mark McKaig*

**From Derby.** —Paul suffered much for the gospel and this was in the purpose of God, for He said, that he must suffer many things for His Name's sake (Acts 9. 16). He was thrown into jail, beaten and nearly killed on several occasions.

Suffering caused him to rely more on the power of God. The Lord said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for **My power is made perfect** in weakness". Therefore **Paul** could say that when he was weak then he was **made** strong. His life was not **an easy one, for** the thorn in the flesh was given to him so that he might not be exalted overmuch, but that the Lord might be glorified in all he did.

Our Lord Jesus is no man's debtor, and if we suffer for His sake then He repays a hundredfold (Matthew 19. 29). The Lord made this promise to his own, for in suffering and inadequacy we are caused to rely on God, and when we acknowledge our weakness His strength prevails.

*A. K. Smith, G. W. Conway*

**From Liverpool.** —There can be no doubt that the things Saul of Tarsus witnessed in the trial and execution of Stephen had a major part in the events leading to his conversion, and the sufferings of that godly man would ever be a challenge to him.

In Romans 8. 18 the apostle says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us-ward".

He took pleasure "in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake..." (2 Corinthians 12. 10).

It was suggested that there were four ways in which God can be glorified as illustrated in the apostle's sufferings: (1) that God's power might be seen (2 Corinthians 12. 7-10). The vessel that God uses is a weak vessel, not a self-sufficient one. Only thus can God's power be made perfect. "When I am weak, then am I strong". (2) That God might demonstrate His deliverance. Paul knew this from experience (2 Timothy 3. 10-12). (3) As a test of faith and faithfulness. Paul exhorted the disciples at Lystra, Iconium and Antioch to continue in the faith, and left them in no doubt "that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14. 22). (4) Bearing the reproach of Christ. Here on earth we can do this for the Lord (Philippians 1. 27-30). He exhorts the saints that they should not be affrighted, for to them was granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf. We judge that the testimony of the apostle Paul would **not** have been as effective as it was **apart** from his suffering.

*R. Harrison, A. H.*

**From Atherton.** —In 1 Corinthians 4. 9-13, Paul speaks of the apostles as being "made a spectacle unto the world". "Spectacle" here translates a Greek word meaning "theatre", used metaphorically. Men use visual means to convey ideas to audiences. God is presenting a visible drama to the world, the cast being the apostles, to bring home certain truths. Various sufferings are the means chosen (verses 11-13). To the unsaved the reality of faith and the inner power of the apostles would thus be high-lighted, as the grace of Christ was seen in them. Acts 16. 23-34 provides a vivid illustration. The patience and joy in suffering of Paul and Silas spoke to the prisoners and the Philippian jailor more than a powerful sermon would. 1 Corinthians 4. 12, 13 presents possibilities for ourselves today: "being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we intreat..." We too may be "fools for Christ's sake" (verse 10), even in ordinary life.

The apostle's sufferings were followed closely by such as Timothy (2 Timothy 3. 10-12). They were a challenge to his faith. Later, when he himself was in prison (Hebrews 13. 23), he would be encouraged by the example of his teacher. Indeed, "all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3. 12). To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Paul himself had been warned beforehand (Acts 21. 11, etc. ).

The witness of others was also strengthened through Paul's sufferings (Philippians 1. 12-14). Also his patient endurance in Roman chains spoke loudly to his captors.

In 2 Corinthians 12. 1-10 Paul describes the extraordinary spiritual revelations specially given to him, and the use of suffering under God to keep him contrite (verse 7), constantly to remind him of his own weakness and to display through him divine power (verse 9). We learn here that those more especially endowed in gift and blessing may be called upon to endure greater suffering, which God may not always relieve after earnest prayer. But the promise stands: "My power is made perfect in weakness".

*D. S. Jones*

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —God permits physical and mental distress as a means of proving a man, as when He called on Abraham to offer his son for a burnt offering. Similarly, Job said, "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23. 10). Such must also have been the experience of Paul, the chosen vessel of the Lord.

Because of the suffering of death the Lord Jesus was crowned with glory and honour (Hebrews 2. 9) [21], so saints should consider it a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name, and look to the reward promised in 2 Timothy 2. 12. Such was ever Paul's aim and practice. He bore branded on his body the marks of Jesus (Galatians 6. 17).

The primary purpose which God has in our affliction is that the Holy Spirit will be manifested in greater power in our weakness, and that God will be glorified thereby (2 Corinthians 12. 9; 1 Peter 4. 14). Had Paul retaliated at Lystra when the Jews were stoning him, how could he and Barnabas have confirmed and exhorted the souls of the disciples as they did? God's further purpose may be seen in the purification through sufferings that we may walk in communion with Him. Thus the Psalmist found a meaning in his distress (Psalm 73. 23, 24), and thus we too are provided with an opportunity of coming nearer to God's injunction, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy"; for by praying for them that persecute us we shall be the more perfect, as our heavenly Father is **perfect** (Matthew 5. 43-48).

*Martin Archibald*

**From Southport.** —Some sufferings are brought on mankind by sin and ignorance. Some cannot be accounted for. Some are allowed by God for chastisement, especially for His sons (Hebrews 12. 5-11).

Paul was an ensample to us of what a Christian can be, in the measure in which we are exercised in suffering, and the measure in which our life is consecrated to the will of God. Surely no life has borne so much fruit to God, as no one has suffered so much as Paul (the Lord Jesus apart). As we peruse the record of his experience at Philippi, we see, among other things, how suffering drew him to God and to prayer. It became the means of the conversion of a whole household.

The life of Paul seems to show that suffering is designed to yield the fruit of righteousness in those who are exercised thereby. He even learned to take pleasure in sufferings, for when he was weak as to the flesh, through the grace of Christ he was strong (2 Corinthians 12. 9, 10).

*T. R.*

**From Cardiff.** —"Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them which so walk even as ye have us for an ensample" (Philippians 3. 17). Acts 9. 15, 16 reveals God's purpose in the apostle's conversion, that he was a chosen vessel to testify to Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel for the Name's sake of his Lord and Master, and that testimony would bring him suffering.

This must always be so if God's people are faithful to the purpose for which they were called by the Lord, for did not the Lord say to His disciples (John 15. 20), "Remember... A servant is not greater than his Lord. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you". Paul also wrote, "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3. 12).

The apostle realized that the suffering that he endured for the sake of His Name would bring him great blessing, and thus he could write, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward" (Romans 8. 18). If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him, He also will deny us.

**From Vancouver, B. C.** —Paul was told that he would be set up as an ensample, not of one who suffers, but of one in whom God sees a purpose for suffering (Acts 9). God wished to show others that one can suffer more than usual and yet still lead a life of blessing. The reason for this was that Paul was not one to grumble constantly at his lot, but to attempt to see how God was trying to cleanse the dross out, by placing him in the crucible of suffering. It could almost be said that Paul would not have been the man he was had he not suffered so much. In a similar manner it is necessary that we too should suffer to become more Christ-like.

The incident in the Philippian jail gives us a concrete example of Paul's attitude to suffering. He and Silas prayed and sang hymns and rejoiced. Peter presents a parallel thought in his epistle (1 Peter 4. 13). He tells his fellow-saints to rejoice when persecuted. We must draw a distinction between types of sufferings. It is wrong to rejoice in suffering for evil-doing, but there is good cause to rejoice in persecution while acting like Christ in suffering for righteousness' sake. There are two types of Christian suffering. We can be persecuted because of a Christ-like life or we can receive temptations from Satan.

We read of Paul's glorying in 2 Corinthians 12. He does not glory in his works and feats for God, but in his sufferings. He was not boasting of the fact that he had received more persecution than anyone else, but of the fact that the resultant weakness made him more aware of his reliance on God.

*J.*

*Bell,*

*J. Pope*

**From Carlisle.** —Right from the start of his Christian life and ministry Paul was under no illusion about the suffering which lay ahead (Acts 9. 16). He must often have thought upon the divine purpose in his

tribulations. It seems clear that his understanding of this purpose grew steadily out of his exceedingly testing experiences. Late in his life he could find satisfaction in Timothy's having followed him in, amongst other things, his persecutions (2 Timothy 3. 10, 11).

Paul's life amply displayed many of the precious fruits of suffering for the Lord's Name's sake. Paul is seen to have learned the essential lesson for the servant of God, that self-sufficiency can block the flow of divine power. Though compelled to assert to the Corinthians his authority, he wrote at the same time of his sufferings. His revelations were, in God's wisdom, balanced by the constant presence of humbling through a painful disability. The Lord's words to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee", have illumined many a sick-bed and sore trial. This places all human endeavour in its proper place and presents to all men the all-sufficiency of Christ. Only thus will God's doctrine be clear and the ministry of God's servants fulfilled in winning men for His kingdom.

*J. D. T., R. H.*

From Hamilton. —Paul was appointed by God not only to be a minister of the gospel but also to suffer many things for His Name's sake.

In 1 Corinthians 11. 1 the exhortation is given, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ". Not only did Paul emulate his Lord in love, grace and longsuffering, but as it behoved Christ to suffer, so also was it necessary that His servant should suffer. It would appear from the life of Paul that as his faith was great so also was his suffering.

As God looked into the heart of Saul of Tarsus while he sat with sightless eyes in the house in the street called Straight, He saw there a man who would be willing not only to uphold the Name of Christ, but would also be able to endure the reproaches, beatings, mental sufferings and, above all, the spiritual sufferings which he must experience.

The faith of Paul and Job can be compared. Of the latter God could say to Satan, "He still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause" (Job 2. 3). When his wife entreated him to renounce God and die because of his sufferings, his faith remained unshaken. All that he had of this world's goods was taken away, but at the end of his sufferings, because of the triumph of his faith, "the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning" (Job 42. 12). Job's experiences recall the words of Paul when he says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward".

*Allan R. Fotheringham*

## COMMENTS

[1] (Birmingham). Yes, the man of 2 Corinthians 12 2 was Paul himself.

*J. M.*

[2] (**Glasgow, Govan and Partick**). Not knowing the mind of our friends and others on this verse (Hebrews 2. 9), which I have heard frequently quoted in part and the word "now" added, which of course is not in the R. V. or A. V., ("because of the suffering of death (now) crowned with glory and honour"), I make the following comment. The verse reads thus, "**But** we behold Him who hath **been** made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man". The fact is that this verse views the Lord on earth, where He was a little lower than angels, and on earth He was crowned with glory and honour; the object of this crowning was, that He should taste death for every man. It shows what a misquotation can do, and what a little word added can do (which is "now" in this case) changing the meaning of the inspired words of a passage of Scripture.

*J. M.*

## NOTES ON THE PSALMS

### PSALM 42

*(continued)*

"I will say unto God my Rock, why hast Thou forgotten me?  
 Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?  
 As with a sword in my bones, mine adversaries reproach me;  
 While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?"  
 (verses 9, 10).

Here the psalmist returns again to what his adversaries were saying, "Where is thy God?", and he tells God of his mourning and of the oppression of the enemy. Oppression is a serious thing, by whomsoever caused, to those who suffer it. It was to the psalmist like a sword in his bones. But he turned, as all sufferers should, to God who is the Rock of defence.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?  
 And why art thou disquieted within me?  
 Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,  
 Who is the health of my countenance, and my God" (verse 11).

This is an assuring and blessed ending to this psalm of a weeping and oppressed man. "Hope thou in God" is the answer to cast down and disquieted souls. Well did Peter say, when the Lord asked the apostles if they would go away as others had done, "To whom shall we go?" It was not in his mind, "Where shall we go?" Where in this world can the sorrowing or oppressed go for relief to their spirit? Nowhere! But we can come to Christ, who is the Way to God, and those who set their faces that we shall praise Him who is the health of their countenance, and their God.

*J. M.*

## PSALM 43

"Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation:

O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.

For Thou art the God of my strength; why hast Thou cast me off?

Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"  
(verses 1, 2).

The psalm seems to be an extension of the previous one; in it are expressed the same sentiments as in the former. The psalmist seeks God to give him judgement and to plead his cause against an ungodly nation. One would scarcely have thought that Israel could be described as an ungodly nation in the time of the revival in David's day, when these psalms of instruction (*MASCHIL*) were written. If the nation was ungodly then, what could be its state in times of serious backsliding as are revealed in its history? We can understand that there were always, even in Israel's best days, men who were unjust and deceitful, and deliverance of devout people from such was always a necessity. The God of Israel was the God who gave strength to the psalmist, and though he thought of himself in the times of mourning and oppression as being cast off, this was not really so. His days were days of trial and not of abandonment.

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth; let them lead me:

Let them bring me unto **Thy** holy hill,

And to Thy tabernacles.

Then will I go unto the altar of God,

Unto God my exceeding joy:

And upon the harp will I praise Thee, O God, my God"  
(verses 3, 4).

Here the psalmist turns, from his sorrow and trouble over the people amongst whom his lot is cast, to his God, the God of Israel, **and** he asks Him to send out His light and truth. "The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light" (Proverbs 6. 23), and those who walk in that light and truth, their path will be "the path of the righteous" which "is as a shining light (the light of dawn, R. V. M. ), that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4. 18). The contrast in this verse is no doubt the light of the dawn and that of the noonday. Such is the increased light of the path of the righteous. Whence came the light and truth that were to lead the psalmist? Undoubtedly these came from God's holy hill and from His tabernacles there. There was God's altar, and there also was God in a sense in which He was nowhere else on earth. For when God dwelt there among His people, He was there to be their exceeding joy, and they were to be His joy. When the service of song was added by David and others to the altar service instituted by Moses, the singers praised their God upon the harp **and** other musical instruments.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?

And why art thou disquieted within me?

Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him,

Who is the health of my countenance, **and** my God" (verse 5).

This psalm ends exactly like Psalm 42. He **speaks again of** being cast down and disquieted, **and of the remedy for this in the confidence he had in God.** "Hope thou in God"; such is the **sure hope in the darkest hour;** for the godly will **yet** praise God **for his health or salvation,** as the Hebrew word also means. J. M.

#### PSALM 44

Whilse Psalms 42 and 43 are for the most part the individual experience of the writer, this psalm (44) deals largely with that which is collective, which has in view the people of Israel.

"We have heard with our ears,  
O God, our fathers have told us,  
What work Thou didst in their days, in the days of old.  
Thou didst drive out the nations with Thy hand, and plantedst them in;  
Thou didst afflict the peoples, and didst spread them abroad"  
(verses 1, 2).

There was the traditional teaching of the fathers to the children in Israel, and also men were wrought upon by God's Spirit to give an inspired account of the work of God. Moses was the first to write this sacred history, and even to give an account of the creation and making of the heaven and the earth when there was no man to take account of what transpired. This undoubtedly came about by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that is indeed a miracle. We have in Genesis a record of truth, not of legend or imagination, and it is part of the Scriptures of which the Lord said, "Thy word is truth" (John 17. 17).

The teaching of the fathers would impress itself upon their children, and they would believe what their fathers had seen; thus it would be handed down from generation to generation. Oral teaching was subject to vagary, but as the Scriptures began to appear, there was a standard to correct all wandering from the truth.

Such a matter as is stated above could not be denied, as to God driving out the nations of Canaan and planting Israel in their land, for they had come from Egypt, a land not theirs, to the land of promise. These peoples of Canaan were afflicted, driven out by hornets as well as by Israel, and were spread abroad in other lands.

The difference between sowing and planting in the New Testament should be carefully noted. Sowing is what the preacher does when he scatters abroad the seed of the gospel, but planting has to do with bringing people into the place of God's choice to yield fruit to Him, even as God did when He brought His people to the land of Canaan.

"For they gat not the land in possession by their own sword,  
Neither did their own arm save them:  
But Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance,  
Because Thou hadst a favour unto them" (verse 3).

Israel could never have taken the land of Canaan by their own strength **and** sword. The **power of God** was with them **and** this is explained by Moses, "**And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall chase ten thousand**" (Leviticus 26. 7, 8).

It was **not** their own arm, but God's that gave them victory. And the reason was, "Because Thou hadst a favour unto them". Many years ago I went to visit a brother in the Lord who was on his death-bed. He had, before I entered his home, been reading this psalm, and these words about God having a favour to Israel filled his heart with joy and his eyes with tears, for he thought of God's favour to him in the words of Ephesians 2. 8, "For by grace (favour) have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God". Many things I have forgotten in the years that have intervened since then, but I shall never forget this dear brother's joy in his being saved by grace. Both he and his wife have been in the glory for many years now. "The LORD will give grace and glory" (Psalm 84. 11).

"Thou art my King, O God:

Command deliverance for Jacob.

Through Thee will we push down our adversaries:

Through Thy name will we tread them under that rise up  
against us.

For I will not trust in my bow,

Neither shall my sword save me" (verses 4, 5, 6).

This statement by the sons of Korah, "Thou art my King, O God", shows how truly they were free from the grievous sin of their father, who in his rebellion was out to destroy the kingship of God over Israel who had placed Moses as the leader of Israel and Aaron as high priest (Numbers 16). These sons of Korah acknowledged God as their absolute monarch. They seek Him to command deliverance for Israel, for Israel was seldom without adversaries. But by His power they would push down their adversaries, and through His name they would tread down such as rose up against them. But in this fighting they would not trust in their bow nor would their sword save any of them.

"But Thou hast saved us from our adversaries,

And hast put them to shame that hate us.

In God have we made our boast all the day long,

And we will give thanks unto Thy name for ever" (verses 7, 8).

(Selah)

Though Israel had known salvation from their adversaries in the past, such as hated them were ever ready to attack them, Philistines, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites, and others. What they had known of God's goodness and delivering power, they made their boast all the day long, and gave thanks to His name for ever. This is the right attitude of God's saints today who "pause and consider" (Selah) deliverances they have known. For as truly as Israel had their adversaries, we have ours (Ephesians 6. 10-18). How very much we have to give thanks to God for!

"**But** now Thou hast cast us off, and brought us to dishonour;  
 And goest not forth with **our** hosts.  
 Thou makest us to turn back from the adversary:  
 And they which hate us spoil for themselves.  
 Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat;  
 And hast scattered us among the nations" (verses 9, 10, 11).

Here we have a change of aspect in the writer's mind, and of Israel's condition. Instead of seeing God delivering His people, the view he takes is that of God casting off Israel, bringing them to dishonour; by His not going forth with their hosts, they are made to turn back from their adversaries. They are appointed as sheep for meat, and scattered among the nations. A sadder picture of Israel could hardly be drawn. But this is what we see in the book of Judges, in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. Though in the last four books we have the times of victory in the days of David, and peace for the most part in those of Solomon; there were many dark days in the times covered by those books when Israel grieved God by their idolatrous and sinful ways, and He allowed their enemies to humble them and to slay many thousands of them, not to speak of the civil wars between Israel and Judah. Well might the godly in Israel and Judah sing sadly these words, for how true they were as their history reveals.

"Thou sellest Thy people for nought,  
 And hast not increased Thy wealth by their price,  
 Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours,  
 And a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.  
 Thou makest us a byword among the nations,  
 A shaking of the head among the peoples" (verses 12, 13, 14).

Thus the writer lays the charge at God's door for what has happened to Israel, but they were themselves the cause for what had happened to them. Deuteronomy 28. 1-14 and other portions tell of the blessings that would come upon Israel if they observed God's commandment. "The LORD thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come upon thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God". There would have been no limit to the material blessings which God would have bestowed upon them if only they had been obedient to Him. But if they did not hearken to the voice of the LORD, then the curses mentioned in the rest of this chapter (28) would come upon them (verses 15 to 68). They were well warned as to what disobedience would mean for them. Here in the verses above is part of what Israel brought upon themselves, and can we doubt that such visitation came upon them because of their evil ways, which both the record of Scripture and what has happened to the Jewish people in our own times prove?

J.

M.

(*To be continued D. V.*)

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# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11)

VOLUME 34

DECEMBER, 1966

## EDITORIAL

Grateful thanks are due to the 94 brethren from 25 assemblies who have contributed 207 papers on this year's syllabus subject. It is several years since so many papers have been received. The consistent work of a number of assemblies (13 have written 10 or more articles each) and the many younger brethren sending in contributions are especially pleasing aspects of the past twelve months' study. We trust that the preparatory work, the discussions and the writing-up of conclusions have been spiritually fruitful.

Special attention is drawn to some practical points. Nearly one third of the papers received arrived late, we therefore emphasize again that the *last* date for receipt is the tenth of the month, about eight weeks before publication. Any arriving after this date delay editorial work, imposing unnecessary burdens upon editors and printers who have to keep to a strict time-table to ensure that the magazine is in the hands of saints on the first Lord's day of the month of issue. We urge those responsible to arrange discussion meetings at least a fortnight before articles have to be posted so that there is adequate time to write them.

It is also again necessary to ask brethren not to write on notepaper of the ordinary size, which is too small, but to use complete quarto or foolscap sheets, writing on one side only and leaving a margin of at least one inch on the left hand side. If possible a typewriter should be used, but even then a wide margin is essential and double or treble line spacing is necessary to provide space for amendments.

Finally, we would encourage present contributors not to relax their efforts, and we urge others to join them in this spiritually healthful exercise (1 Timothy 4. 7, 8). It is important that brethren, particularly younger ones, should become increasingly proficient in the skill of expressing in writing the results of Bible study. Careless, superficial or common-place remarks should be avoided. Writers should try to produce constructive, well thought out contributions which add to our knowledge of the subject under discussion or emphasize with new appeal some well known truth. "Be diligent in these things" (1 Timothy 4. 15).  
*L. B.*

## PAUL THE APOSTLE

### A STUDY IN SPIRITUAL CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENT

#### Paul's Relations with His Brethren

**From Whitehills and Macduff.** —When Paul returned from Arabia, being full of the Spirit, he went up to Jerusalem particularly to become acquainted with Peter (Galatians 1. 18). In Jerusalem Paul found that the disciples still remembered him as the persecutor of the church and were not anxious to receive him as a brother born of the Spirit.

Barnabas took an interest in Paul and told the apostles how the Lord appeared unto him in the way and how at Damascus he preached boldly the Name of the Jesus (Acts 9. 27). After hearing this and hearing Paul speak, the apostles took him to be one of them, and when his life was threatened by the Grecian Jews the brethren sent him to Tarsus.

Paul had great tact, but his chief interest was the furtherance of the gospel, even if this meant parting with his friends and companions. In Paul's case this gained him the recommendation of his brethren to the grace of the Lord (Acts 15. 40).

Although Paul was a very learned man and in all points stood superior to his brethren in the matter of education, he was always humble and gracious. In Galatians 2 however, we see how faithful to the truth Paul was in that he resisted Cephas to his face at Antioch, pointing out that Cephas was wrong in his attitude to Gentiles. Peter acknowledged that the wisdom shown in Paul's writings was God-given (2 Peter 3. 15, 16).

When Paul spoke of those who had fallen through temptation he was not harsh, and even when he was left alone to stand trial, he said that he did not wish this to be laid to their account (2 Timothy 4. 16). At all times Paul was gracious and forgiving towards his brethren and always careful **for** their conscience.

*W. Johnston*

**From Methil.** —Paul always sought the fellowship of his brethren. Soon after his conversion, on his return to Jerusalem, he attempted to join, himself to the disciples there, but they were afraid of him because of his former reputation, until Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. From that time onward Paul had full fellowship "and he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem". When Paul's life was endangered they were concerned for his safety and they brought him down to Caesarea, a round trip of approximately 120 miles.

Paul and Barnabas were chosen by the Holy Spirit to work together (Acts 13. 1-3). They were beloved brethren, men who hazarded their lives for the Lord Jesus. Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 15. 30). After some days there, Paul suggested returning to the cities previously visited to see how the brethren fared. Whereupon Barnabas proposed to take with them John Mark, his cousin. Paul did not agree to this, explaining that Mark had abandoned the work when he withdrew from them at Pamphylia. There arose a sharp contention so that they parted from one another. (Acts 15. 36-41).

Barnabas, not heeding Paul's counsel, took Mark and sailed to Cyprus. It is a serious matter if the work of the Lord is hindered through differences of opinion. We are glad to say that this was not a permanent cleavage, for Paul and Barnabas worked together at a later date. Any discord among brethren is hated by the LORD (Proverbs 6. 16, 19). Paul's action with Barnabas over Mark may well have had a salutary effect on Mark's life (See Colossians 4. 10, 11).

We feel it is significant that the Scriptures are silent about Barnabas and Mark and their journeys; we are not told what they accomplished. On the other hand we are told that Paul chose Silas and was commended by the brethren, and he went through Syria and Cilicia, as originally planned confirming the churches (Acts 15. 23, 41).

The apostle was a faithful man **and**, when necessary, had to **correct** his brethren, **but** in a right spirit. This he did with **Peter over** the subject of circumcision, when he found he was **not** walking uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel (Galatians 2. 14). It required Paul's definite action, for Peter was having an adverse effect on the rest of the Jews, including Barnabas (verse 13).

We must not think that Paul was a difficult man to get on with. He worked well with his brethren and he had a great care for the churches. In his letter to the Colossians we see how highly he regards such men as Aristarchus and Epaphras and others. The apostle was a man who had full fellowship with the saints, he was open and above-board. Secrecy destroys fellowship but Paul kept nothing back, "All my affairs shall Tychicus make known unto you" (Colossians 4. 7). In the Colossian letter Paul recognized Mark as a fellow-worker unto the kingdom of God, and one who had been a comfort to him.

Paul could in love deal with very difficult matters, such as in the case of Onesimus, the runaway slave, who became a convert of the apostle Paul while he was at Rome. Paul knew it would be wrong for Onesimus and Philemon, brothers in the flesh to remain estranged. So he sent a most beautiful letter by the hand of Onesimus in order that Philemon would receive Onesimus, not of necessity but of free will.

We are reminded of Psalm 133 "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity".

*N. G. Coomer, R. C. Surgeon*

From Liverpool. —The epistles are filled with incidents that give us a clear picture of the apostle's attitude towards his brethren. His first meeting with the brethren after his conversion was clouded with suspicion on their part, and it was understandably difficult for them to accept him, a former enemy. Barnabas helped, and this was the beginning of an association in a work of evangelizing.

Spiritual giant though he was, Paul valued the views of others on personal matters and was willing to be guided, as seen in Philemon 14, "without thy mind I would do nothing".

His relationships were not always trouble-free, for Acts 15 reveals a cleavage between Barnabas and Paul because of the former's insistence that he should take Mark with them on the second missionary journey. Paul judged otherwise and such was the contention that a hitherto happy relationship was marred. It would appear that the blood-relationship between Barnabas and Mark (see Colossians 4. 10) might well have been the basis of this determined attitude on the part of Barnabas.

Paul was a forthright man and took Peter to task because of his inconsistency. He realized that others would be affected by this, in fact some were hindered, including Barnabas. Peter had been guilty of partiality and was a bad example, and some straight talking was required. Paul was the man to do this. His direct yet gracious approach was admirable.

*D. Home, A. H.*

### EXTRACTS

**From Denmark Hill, London.** —Leaders of expeditions to remote areas take great pains to choose men who will not only be equal to the task but who have personalities that will not clash or be detrimental to morale. We tend to select friends whose personalities are compatible

with our own. Churches of God now, as in Paul's day, contain all kinds of folk, and Paul's relations with some of his brethren give an insight into the interplay of character in those early days. Paul loved all the saints, but attention is here concentrated on specific incidents.

He had a difference of opinion with Barnabas as to the suitability of the latter's cousin, John Mark, for missionary work. It is easy, though not necessarily correct, to draw the conclusion that family ties influenced the judgement of Barnabas. In any case the fellowship in the work of Paul and Barnabas terminated (Acts 15, 30-41). A more serious dispute was at Antioch with Peter and the other elders over the matter of circumcision. The basis of the dispute stands in marked contrast to that with Barnabas. Paul stood firmly on matters of principle and doctrine against those whose judgement and understanding of God's will were perhaps not as clear as his own.

Paul bore no grudges. It would have been easy for him to have borne malice towards Mark who, in effect, was instrumental in terminating his fellowship with Barnabas but, on later occasions in Colossians 4 and 2 Timothy 4 he warmly commends Mark for his faithfulness and service. His relationship with Onesimus shows the grace of Paul who was at pains to consult the wronged Philemon before acting himself. There are times today when firmness is needed in matters of principle, but this should be tempered by grace such as Paul showed in his personal dealings. **A. C. B.**

**From Vancouver.** —The fear in the hearts of the brethren at Jerusalem can be justified because of the former outrageous things Paul had done, but Barnabas became his friend, and commended him. Barnabas was unwilling to make a second missionary journey with Paul unless Mark, his relation, went with them. Paul did not want Mark because he had proved unreliable (Acts 15. 38).

Another side of Paul's dealings with his brethren reveals itself in Colossians 4. We can see the love with which he speaks each name and his care for each, even John Mark. It is evident as well that although Paul was an apostle with authority, he remembers he was still just one of the fellow-workers unto the kingdom; and he knows and states something worthy about each of his brethren (Epaphras, a servant of Christ; Luke the beloved physician, etc. ).

The whole epistle of Paul to Philemon is a monument to Paul's ability to mingle fact with firmness. Verse 14 shows that Paul did not impose his mind on others. **J. Bell, J. Pope.**

**From Melbourne, Australia.** —Saul, after his conversion, was with the disciples which were at Damascus. We understand from Galatians 1. 17 that, following upon his escape, he went down to Arabia for some time, later returning to Damascus [1].

Acts 9. 26, 27 reveals that Barnabas took him to the apostles and spoke in his defence, after which he was with the saints, coming in and going out at Jerusalem. We noted that the word used in verse 26 was "join" and that this means to "glue together" or "cement". It was suggested that this was the mind of the apostle Paul towards the believers who were together in churches of God; his relationship with them was not of a temporary or haphazard nature, but was a solid link, as he himself said in a later portion, it was to be "knit together in love".

In Acts 15. 36-41 we see a difference of mind developing between Paul and Barnabas over whether they should take John Mark with them again. From Colossians 4. 10 it appears that Mark was the cousin of Barnabas, and it is possible that this relationship swayed Barnabas and caused him to insist that Mark should go with them. It was felt that Paul was right in his judgement as the brethren commended him when he went forth with Silas. *P. W. A.*

**From Derby.** —Barnabas was perhaps Paul's first close friend, it was he who declared to the saints at Jerusalem that Paul had seen the Lord (Acts 9. 26-30). They went on their first journey together. However, they eventually parted, because of a disagreement over whether Mark should go with them on their second journey. It was noticed that Paul's choice to take Silas was approved by the brethren (Acts 15. 37-40).

Paul dealt with Peter over the matter of circumcision. This was necessary regardless of his personal relationship with him.

From Colossians 4. 7-17 we learn that Paul's relations with his brethren were good, and he treated them as co-workers. He asked Philemon to receive Onesimus as himself (Philemon 17). He consulted Philemon concerning this brother and would do nothing without his agreement. *G. W. Conway, A. K. Smith*

**From Southport.** —Paul saw the meaning of the two great commandments of the law, of which the Lord said that upon them the whole law hangs. He loved and served God and the record of his life reveals how wonderfully he loved his brethren, and all men.

The introduction of Paul to the church at Jerusalem was unusual. In it we see the humility which was characteristic of his life. Although his gifts were early manifest, the leading men at Jerusalem judged it wise for him to leave Jerusalem, because of the danger to his life, so he left for Caesarea and then went to his own city of Tarsus.

From that point the fellowship of Paul and Barnabas was close. In the dispute that arose over Mark, Paul was firm in what he felt to be the will of God. The trials which followed Paul and Silas later would have been a severe test for Mark, who before had left the work abroad. Nevertheless, we see the happy relationship of Paul and Mark in later days.

The letter to Philemon in verse 14 shows how careful Paul was to establish true fellowship in the smallest matters. He took pains not to give offence to any, but sought the fullest fellowship in all things. *T. R.*

**From Birmingham.** —Two views were expressed on this subject. One view was that Paul's relationship with his brethren was unimpeachable and comment was made about the soundness of his early desire to join himself to the brethren. It was thought that, in the case of the dispute between Paul and Barnabas, Paul was in the right and that he was vindicated by the action of the brethren in commending him to God's grace before he set forth with Silas. Referring to Paul's criticism of Peter as recorded in Galatians 2, this was carried out in a right and proper manner.

The other view was that there is abundant proof in Scripture of Paul's love and yearning for his brethren. Paul was a born leader and

a strong character (being the leader of the company when on the road to Damascus for instance). It was felt that to suggest who may have been in the right between Paul and Barnabas would be to conjecture, and that there is no word in the Scriptures of them parting amicably [2].

That the substance of Paul's expressed view concerning Cephas was right is indisputable, but the question was asked, "With the light that we have today, would we go about the matter in the same way, confronting Peter in the sight of them all? Did it make for continuing good relationship?" [3].

*D. H. Elson*

**From Carlisle.** —Paul was viewed with suspicion by the disciples at Jerusalem. Barnabas personally introduced Paul to the apostles, and their attitude toward him changed completely. He was esteemed and loved, and concern for his well-being led them to send him to Tarsus.

Paul later returned to Jerusalem for the conference of apostles and elders. There Paul took a prominent part in the discussions, but he and others succeeded in uniting the conference.

In several scriptures Paul's great love for his brethren is demonstrated. In few words he places on record deeds of faithfulness and courage which stimulated him, although we may have thought such actions too trivial to mention. Name after name is listed, brethren and sisters who were found in humility serving with the great apostle a cause worthy of the highest rank: "We serve the Lord Christ". These names were constantly in Paul's mind, as he served the Lord, in the very forefront of the battle, and they occupied a prominent place in his prayers. He valued highly the support his brethren gave him, and only one thing counted more with him: "the Lord stood by me" (2 Timothy 4. 17).

**From Glasgow (Govan and Partick).** —In John 15. 10-12 the Lord Jesus reveals the relationship which must exist among disciples if their joy is to be fulfilled. "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19), and this love is shown in united obedience to His commandments. It is in this spirit that Paul writes to the saints in Philippi, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love".

Paul appreciated when he saw anything of Christ in a man, and valued the friendship of such a one. He calls Tychicus a "fellow-servant", Onesimus a "beloved brother", Aristarchus and others "fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, men that have been a comfort to me" (Colossians 4. 7-11). He wished a recompense too for the faithfulness of Onesiphorus (2 Timothy 1. 16).

In the account of the sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15. 39), their relationship appears to have been somewhat strained. Though Paul was quite firm, this did not dim the apostle's love for Barnabas; nevertheless Paul's knowledge and appreciation of the task in which he was engaged gave him boldness to say to Barnabas without offence that he thought it not good to take John Mark. So he and Barnabas parted asunder, but not as enemies.

Similarly, Paul was quite frank in his correction of Peter about the matter of circumcision; and yet each could continue to love the other, and Peter later writes of "beloved brother Paul" (2 Peter 3. 15).

Moreover Paul was sensitive to any sign of a renewed purpose to carry out the Lord's will. Thus he exhorts Timothy, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee, for he is useful to me for ministering".

*Eric Archibald*

**From Hamilton.**—Men are revealed by their attitude to their fellow-men, and strong men are tested in depth by other strong men. In a crisis we see what a man is.

While some of Paul's brethren were men of outstanding gift and power like Barnabas, Peter, Silas, and Judas called Barsabbas, there were also men of lesser ability like Onesimas and Jesus who is called Justus, also a vast number of brethren whose names are unknown (Colossians 4. 7-15). In the epistles of Paul we see clearly his love for the brethren.

In Galatians 2. 11-15 we read of Paul's dealings with Peter, an outstanding man of God and a leader of the people of God. Paul writes, "I resisted him to the face". Here we see Paul's strength of character in standing against a mighty opponent like Peter. It takes a leader to reprove a leader. Paul was in no way inferior in ability or strength or in knowledge of the will of God to the apostle Peter and so he resisted Peter "because he stood condemned". Because of his fear, Peter led others into dissimulation. How important it is for leaders to lead in the way of God and not to lead astray! M. C.

**From Edinburgh.**—To the disciples, Peter must have been a great leader, but Paul, discerning the error in his teaching, accused the apostle Peter and those with him of not "walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel"; uncompromising words indeed! In fact Paul's lack of respect for reputations was universal when the truth was in danger of being compromised, "whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me" (Galatians 2. 6) [4].

On matters of principle the apostle was unmovable, but where fundamental truth was not in question Paul was open to the suggestions and wishes of his brethren. He wrote to Philemon, "Without thy mind I would do nothing" (Philemon 14) and he acquiesced in the desire of Philemon to have Onesimus [5].

Uncompromising though he was on the truth of God, he lived as he taught, "to me to live is Christ". At times what Paul spoke or wrote troubled the consciences of his brethren, but always his motive was love. Love "rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth" (1 Corinthians 13. 6). His relationship with the saints was like father to children and thus did they accept his words of exhortation, encouragement and comfort (1 Thessalonians 2. 11). L. Burgoyne

### THE SONS OF ZERUIAH

Joab, Abishai and Asahel were brothers, nephews of David, king of Israel. Zeruiah their mother was a sister of Nahash, David's mother. (Compare 2 Samuel 17. 25 with 1 Chronicles 2. 13-16). Joab was the captain of king David's armies. Abishai was the chief of the three mighty men, though he attained not to the first three. Asahel was "as light of foot as a wild roe". They were the foremost men in Israel of their day.

After a life-time's association with them David could say of Joab and Abishai (Asahel was dead by this time, slain by Abner), "these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me" (2 Samuel 3. 39).

It is with Joab, that we are particularly concerned in this paper. Fame, rank, wealth and ambition were all Joab's in large measure. He was loved and respected by some, feared and even hated by others. It is as a soldier, captain of the hosts of Israel, that we know him. He served David faithfully for most of the forty years of his reign; he endured the privations and hardships of the years of David's exile when Saul hunted after David's life.

He was captain of David's armies, and, on occasion, offered David good advice, as in 2 Samuel 24. 3. He served David well, except when he slew Abner and Amasa, when he brought Absalom back to Jerusalem and when he turned aside after Adonijah, another of David's sons who tried to seize the throne.

He must often have put his life in jeopardy for David, yet we find that he is not mentioned in the roll of honour of David's mighty men. Why is this? David at the end of his life commanded his son Solomon not to let Joab's hoar head go down to the grave in peace (1 Kings 2. 6).

The issue of Joab's life should hold a salutary warning for us. He served well, often perhaps from wrong motives. What he did was not always in the best interests of the king. He aimed high, but like Hymenaeus and Philetus he "missed the mark" (2 Timothy 2. 17, R. V. M. ). Joab's life underlines the fact that "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Corinthians 10. 18).

*J.*

*Peddie.*

## COMMENTS

[1] (**Melbourne, Australia**). —I think if our friends compare Acts 9. 23 with Galatians 1. 17-20, they will see that the words, "And when many days were fulfilled", covers the three years from his conversion to his arriving back at Damascus from Arabia. But when the Jews sought to kill him, his disciples let him down through the wall in a basket. It was only after his second time in Damascus that he went to Jerusalem. Note the force of Galatians 1. 17.

*J. M.*

[2] (**Birmingham**). —Though Barnabas was "a son of consolation" (Acts 4. 36 R. V. M. ) yet such men can be influenced by circumstances which are not for their good. Barnabas was evidently wrong in deciding his own course, of taking Mark with him and sailing away to Cyprus, his native island. Paul in contrast chose Silas, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord (Acts 15. 39-41).

*J. M.*

[3] (**Birmingham**). —Peter's action was a public one, and even affected Barnabas in a wrong way, so I do not see in such a case that it would be wrong to follow Paul's example of stating the truth in a Christian spirit.

*J. M.*

[4] (**Edinburgh**). —In Galatians this does not indicate "lack of respect".

*Jas. M.*

[5] (**Edinburgh**). —What evidence in the letter to Philemon can our friends produce for this statement?

*Jas.*

*M.*

"Neglect not **the gift that is in thee**,... **Be diligent in these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy progress may be manifest unto all.**"  
1 Timothy 4. 14, 15.

"**Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.**"  
2 Timothy 2. 15.

Greetings in the Lord.

*Editors*

## NOTES ON THE PSALMS

### PSALM 44

*(continued)*

"All the **day** long is **my** dishonour before me,  
**And** the shame of **my** face hath covered me,  
For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth;  
By reason of the **enemy** and the **avenger**" (verses 15, 16).

In Israel's **departure** from God there were **men** who did not follow the lawlessness and disobedience of the most **part** of the people. There was a Gideon in the **time** of the invasion of the Midianites and Amalekites (**Judges** chapters 6, 7), and in Elijah's **time**, when Ahab and Jezebel brought such evil into Israel, there were **seven** thousand **men** in Israel who had not bowed the **knee** to Baal (Romans 11. 4). In the **times** of apostasy there were prophets and schools of the prophets who hearkened to God and obeyed Him. In the **verses** above we have the writer expressing his grief, and **because** of such calamities as had **befallen Israel**, he **speaks** of his dishonour and his shame, because of the voice of the reproacher and blasphemer and also **because** of the **enemy** and avenger.

"All this **is** come upon **us**; **yet** have we not forgotten Thee,  
Neither have we dealt falsely **in** Thy covenant.  
Our heart is not turned **back**,  
Neither have our **steps** declined from Thy way;  
That Thou hast sore broken **us** in the place of **jackals**,  
**And** covered **us** with the shadow of death" (verses 17, 18, 19).

Here the writer of the psalm thinks of himself and others like himself, not of the nation of Israel, whose **state** he outlines in **verses** 9-14. **He** says that he and other godly ones had not forgotten God, nor dealt falsely **in** His covenant; their heart had not **turned back**, nor had their **steps** declined from God's way; **yet**, **sad** to say, the godly have often shared in the sorrows that the wicked have brought about through their lawlessness. **Suffering** is often a **mystery**, for **many** **suffer** through the wrongdoing of others. God spoke of **visiting** the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, **unto** the third and fourth generation (Exodus 34. 7). The sin and sorrow of the **acts** of **Adam** and **Eve** passed to all their children through countless generations. Here in the above **verses**, the writer **speaks** of himself and others **being broken in** the place of jackals (out in the wilds), and **covered** with the shadow of death.

"If we have forgotten the name of our God,  
 Or spread forth our hands to a strange **god**;  
 Shall not God search this out?  
 For He knoweth the secrets of the heart.  
 Yea, for Thy sake are we killed all the day long;  
 We are counted as sheep for the slaughter" (verses 20, 21, 22).

After His statements about the godly in Israel in verses 17 and 18, here in the verses just quoted, he says that if they had forgotten the name of God, and spread forth their hands to a strange god, would not this be known to God who knows the secrets of the heart? But in contrast they for God's sake were killed all the day long, and were counted as sheep for the slaughter. Verse 22 is quoted by Paul as to the tribulation, anguish, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, and sword, which could not separate them from the love of Christ. They were, despite their sufferings, more than conquerors through Him that loved them. It is not through lack of love that the Lord allows His saints to suffer, whether in the past or present, but in such sufferings they are more than conquerors through their divine Lover (Romans 8. 35-37).

"Awake, why sleepest Thou, O Lord?  
 Arise, cast us not off for ever.  
 Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face,  
 And forgettest our affliction and oppression?  
 For our soul is bowed down to the dust:  
 Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.  
 Rise up for our help.  
 And redeem us for Thy lovingkindness' sake"  
 (verses 23, 24, 25, 26).

Here, it seems to me, the writer pleads not only for the godly but for the whole people, whose wrongdoing had brought suffering upon themselves as well as on the godly. He is bold when he calls for the Lord to awake from sleep, for "He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121. 4). It appeared to the authors of the Psalm that God had cast off Israel because of His inactivity in their deliverance. They refer earlier to their being cast off (verse 9). But He was neither asleep nor had He cast off Israel, even though He seemed to be hiding His face and forgetting their affliction. They had been brought very low, for they had been brought down to the dust and they were cleaving to the earth. At the close of the psalm he calls upon God to rise up for their help, and to redeem them, not for any merit in themselves, but for His lovingkindness' sake. Such is the reason for all God's working towards Israel and towards all mankind. Paul shows this clearly in Ephesians 2. 4:

"But God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus".  
 J.M.

## PSALM 45

"My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter:

I speak the things which I have made touching the King:

My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (verse 1).

This psalm is not only one of instruction (*MASCHIL*), but is "A Song of loves". It is a song of a Person with whom the author is in love. Consequently his heart is bubbling up and overflowing like a spring. It is not as the heart of the wicked which overfloweth with wickedness, as David said to king Saul, whom he refused to slay, but accused him of his wickedness, "As saith the proverb of the ancients, Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness" (1 Samuel 24. 13). In contrast to this the heart of the writer overfloweth with goodly matter. What he writes are the things which he had made touching the King, that is, King Messiah. "Made" here is the Hebrew word *MASSEH*, which is rendered "occupation" in Genesis 46. 33; 47. 3, in the question which Pharaoh addressed to Joseph's brethren, "What is your occupation?" It is a precious thought to think of the psalmist's occupation being the things touching the King. He found no difficulty of expression because he knew the One he loved, and his tongue was the pen of a ready writer. "Ready" is from the Hebrew word *MA KIR* which means "hasty" showing the speed with which he wrote.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men;

Grace is poured into Thy lips:

Therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever" (verse 2).

The Hebrew word for "fairer" is *YAPHAH*, which is rendered "beautiful" in Songs of Songs 7. 1 and Ezekiel 16. 13. We are told that David was of "a beautiful countenance" (1 Samuel 16. 12). But the Messiah is more beautiful than the children of men. Though in the days of His lowly earthly life He had "no beauty (Hebrew *MAREH*, appearance) that we should desire Him". His beauty was within like that of the tabernacle of old. His beauty was that of the glory of the only Begotten from the Father. But we are yet to see Him even as He now is, for His will is that we should see His glory (1 John 3. 2; John 17. 24), and then our bodies will be conformed to the body of His glory and we shall be like Him (Philippians 3. 21). God has poured grace (Hebrew *CHEN*, grace, favour), into or upon His lips. This grace the Lord poured out to those who heard Him in the synagogue in Nazareth, when He read from Isaiah 61. 1, 2; Luke 4. 17-19. "And He began to say unto them, Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of His mouth" (Luke 4. 21, 22). He continued to pour out the words of grace until the day in which He was received up (Acts 1. 1, 2). "Therefore" because "grace is poured into Thy lips", God hath blessed Him for ever. He is blessed by God as Abraham was, of whom it was said, "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12. 3). This blessing of Abraham was made possible through his Seed, who is Christ (Galatians 3. 16), for God said, "And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 22. 18). This blessing comes to men through the gospel, which proclaims eternal blessedness through the grace which proceeded out of His mouth.

"Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One,  
 Thy glory and Thy majesty.  
 And in Thy majesty ride on prosperously,  
 Because of truth and meekness and righteousness:  
 And Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things.  
 Thine arrows are sharp;  
 The peoples fall under Thee;  
 They are in the heart of the King's enemies" (verses 3, 4, 5).

As we have the grace of God in Christ's first coming to earth; we have the judgement of God in His coming again, as in the verses just quoted. In His first coming He came without any sword, for He had not come to execute God's wrath upon sinners; He was without any display of glory and majesty. He had been made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2. 7), and He was regarded by most as a man utterly. But those who saw His hidden glory behind the veil of His flesh knew Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16. 16, 17; John 11. 27). The Lord will come again, not in poverty as when He was born in a stable and laid in a manger, and brought up in the despised city of Nazereth, but in prosperity, to establish truth and meekness and righteousness, which will characterize His reign on earth for a thousand years. But in establishing these attributes among men His judgements will be severe upon the wicked, for as here stated, His right hand will teach Him terrible things. If the inventions brought into existence by man's hand have taught and will teach men terrible things, how much more terrible will be the judgements of God and the wrath of the Lamb! His arrows, flashing from the glory of His Person, will be sharp, and the peoples will fall under Him, for they will be in the heart of King Messiah's enemies.

"Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:  
 A sceptre of equity is the sceptre of Thy kingdom.  
 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness:  
 Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee  
 With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (verses 6, 7).

Here we have one of the clear statements of Scripture, of which there are not a few, as to the Deity of Jesus Christ. The Lord asked the Pharisees, "What think ye of the Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord,  
 Sit Thou on My right hand,  
 Till I put Thine enemies underneath Thy feet?

If David then calleth Him Lord, how is He his Son? And no one was able to answer Him a word" (Matthew 22. 42-46).

*(To be continued D. V.)*

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