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### Paul's Personality Traits- A Potent Factor in His Success as a Missionary

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**PAUL'S PERSONALITY TRAITS - A POTENT FACTOR  
IN HIS SUCCESS AS A MISSIONARY**

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**A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of New Testament Theology**

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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity**

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**by  
Edwin Harold Wiebel  
May 1944**

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Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Introduction

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Everyone who has read the Bible certainly must have  
been impressed at some time or other by the personality and  
character of the Apostle Paul. One of the most remarkable  
phenomena of the history of mankind is presented in the per-  
sonality and character of St. Paul, who, suddenly appeared  
"as one born out of due time" with incalculable force and  
resistless enthusiasm upon the field of early Christian ac-  
tivities.

The last twenty chapters of the Book of Acts, with the  
exception of chapters ten, eleven, and twelve, are almost  
exclusively devoted to a series of pictures setting forth  
experiences of Paul. The story is compressed and there are  
many gaps, but St. Luke sometimes by a single sentence lights  
up Paul as by a flash of lightning. For an instant he stands  
vividly before us, and we see what manner of man he was. But  
in all his thirteen letters we see his personality manifested  
in every chapter. It becomes apparent in his style of writing,

in the expressions which he uses, and also in the accounts of his own particular life.

Many books have been written on the life of Paul and his Epistles, which treat the subject critically, historically, and exegetically. There are, however, only a few monographs in existence, which have as their central object a treatment of Paul's life in the light of his personality or which make an analysis of his character only. Hence, it is not in accordance with the purpose of this thesis, which it is hoped will meet the wants of the general reader interested in its subject, as well as satisfy the requirements of the Biblical student, to enter upon an elaborate criticism of the Pauline Epistles. In the following pages there will be no discussion as to historical data, geographical information, dates of the missionary journeys and Epistles, nor will there be a dogmatic delineation of the Apostle's characteristics. The purpose of this thesis is to trace those personality traits of St. Paul that are manifested in the various significant incidents in his life, thus showing their influence and importance in making him a success as a missionary.

## I. Influences of his Boyhood Environment and Education

Of the early years of the great Apostle to the Gentiles we have unfortunately only meagre information. As to his education in boyhood and youth and the influences and associations amid which he grew up, we have no definite knowledge. Scripture does not give us much at all, and we must resort to conjectures drawn from what we know of his situations and surroundings of the time. A number of scholars have made a definite study concerning the education of the Jews of that time. This and other information which these scholars have gathered will help to give that needed background when we study Paul's early days and the influence they had on his personality and character.

We know where Paul was born, also his nationality and citizenship from the words of the Apostle himself. "I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city."<sup>1</sup> His birthplace was Tarsus, in Cilicia; his

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1. Acts 21, 39.

nationality was Jewish; his citizenship was Roman. Here, in a city, midway between the East and the West, a busy commercial center, the chief apostle of Jesus Christ was born. Tarsus lay on the banks of the Cydnus river. The wharves were constantly piled with merchandise of many countries. Sailors and merchants, dressed in the costumes and speaking the languages of different races, were not seldom seen on the streets. The town enjoyed a profitable trade in timber and in the long fine hair of the goats raised in the neighboring mountains. The birthplace of Paul was also the center of a large transport trade; for it was the key city to the many villages and inland cities of Cilicia. At an early age, Paul, surrounded by such mixed company might have become familiar with the various activities of the life and the diversities of human character, and even made some acquaintances with those various races, which in his manhood he was destined to influence.

It is usually the case that the features of a strong character display themselves early. The youthful Saul undoubtedly received a broad outlook upon the world, which later served as a definite asset in his missionary activities. His deep concern about strange peoples; his wise understanding of their habits were those dominant characteristics which first found their roots here in Tarsus. As he grew up he was being unawares prepared to encounter men of every class and race, to sympathize with human nature in all its varieties, and to look with tolerance upon the most diverse habits and customs.

The circumstances in which he lived and his environment were so much different from those of the boy Jesus. Christ was reared in a little village in Samaria. Nazareth was rural and closer to nature. Tarsus was an industrial center and more cosmopolitan. Jesus spoke much of the natural scenery and animals, whereas the language of Paul is altogether different.

It is impregnated with the atmosphere of the city and a love with the tramp and hurry of the streets. His imagery is borrowed from scenes of human energy and monuments of cultivated life - the soldier in full armor, the athlete in the arena, the building of houses and temples, the triumphal procession of the victorious general. So lasting are the associations of the boy in the life of the man. 2

And still there was something in common in these two characters. They both understood men. Both knew the lowest and highest in life, the daily task and the distant goal. From their early youth, each learned a trade. Jesus learned the carpenter trade and Paul learned tent-making. In drawing this comparison between Jesus and Paul, we are viewing Jesus merely from the human side.

Before considering further the influence exercised by the birthplace on the future personality of St. Paul, we must pause to inquire what can be discovered about his immediate family. There is very little information concerning his parents other than what the Apostle himself tells us. He states: "I am a Hebrew of the Hebrews,"<sup>3</sup> and "after the strictest sect of

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2. James Stalker, The Life of St. Paul, p. 23.

3. 2 Cor. 11, 22; Phil, 3, 5.



our religion I lived a Pharisee."<sup>4</sup> We also know that he was born a citizen of Rome, therefore his father must have been in good standing with the Roman government to be privileged with its citizenship. That Paul had a sister we know from the narrative in Acts 23, 16. Being a son of Jewish parents, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, and a Pharisee, Paul undoubtedly received the rigorous training which Jewish parents were accustomed to give their children. Dr. Cone, in this study has gathered information from reliable Jewish sources in respect to the education of Jewish children. He writes:

With the fifth year began in the house of the Pharisee the reading of the Scriptures, and not much later the visiting of the synagogue on the three hours of prayer, which to the Jews of the Jews of the Dispersion signified the three daily sacrifices in the temple in Jerusalem. On Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, the reading of the law was listened to. The scholar gradually grew into the school and into the office of a teacher. He read the law, undertook its interpretation, and shared in the controversies. Attendance upon the catechetical and disputatorial exercises and zeal in copying the sacred Scriptures completed the scribe.<sup>5</sup>

The primary purpose of this early training was to give the children a thorough acquaintance with the Holy Writers, i.e., the Old Testament. One cannot read a page of Paul's writings without finding the traces of such an education. It was in studies and habits like these that the young Saul of Tarsus grew up until the age of thirteen. At this age, a

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4. Acts 26, 5.

5. Orello Cone, Paul the Man, the Missionary, and the Teacher, p. 6.

Jewish boy, if he were destined for the position of a Rabbi, entered the school of some great master. His school days at Tarsus were over. We can well imagine that this life of varied circumstances and environment in Tarsus left their imprint upon the youth's outlook upon life (Weltanschauung) and manifested itself in his later activity. Each day he would, on his way to school and between school hours, come into contact with playmates who were Greeks and Romans and learn of their way of life in contrast with his rigid school training. He saw the moral levity and ungodly life of these Gentiles. This was, indeed, a horrible sight to his young mind filled with religious zeal.

It is not improbable that the impression made upon his young mind by the moral degradation of heathen Tarsus was reproduced in the dark picture of gentile shame and vice drawn in Rom. 1, 21-32, just as the inscription upon the pedestal of the statue of Sardanapalus in a neighboring city: "Eat, drink, enjoy thyself; the rest is nothing," may have suggested the pessimistic words: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 6

From the statement in 1 Cor. 15, 32, Paul seems to have become acquainted with the teachings of the sophists and rhetoricians in Tarsus.

It is also of importance to note what influence living the life of a Pharisee had on the molding of his character and personality. However, before we treat the life of Paul as a Pharisee and show how this was an influential factor in the develop-

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6. Cone, op. cit., p. 4.

ment of his personality, we shall dip a little further into the study of his Rabbinical training which he continued at the feet of Gamaliel in Jerusalem.

Paul had completed the training in the synagogue at Tarsus. His elementary training in the study of the law was finished; now he was ready to further his education in the law of the fathers. He was a studious and industrious lad, and he profited more than many of his equals (Gal. 1, 14). His profound knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures shows how familiar he was with them. Farrar points out Paul's keen knowledge of Scriptures, stating:

From the Pentateuch, from the Prophets, and above all from the Psalter, he not only quotes repeatedly, advancing at each step of the argument from quotation to quotation, as though without these his argument, which is often in reality quite independent of them, would lack authority; but he also quotes, as is evident, from memory, and often into one brief quotation weaves the verbal reminiscences of several passages. Like all Hellenistic Jews he uses the Greek version of the LXX., but he had an advantage over most Hellenists in that knowledge of the original Hebrew which sometimes stands him in good stead. Yet though he can refer to the original when occasion requires, the LXX. was to him as much "the Bible" as our English version is to us.... He knew it so well that his sentences are constantly moulded by its rhythm, and his thoughts incessantly coloured by its expressions. 7

This strict and thorough training which he received, the ability to use and quote the Scriptures at will, all helped to mold those distinct characteristics which will manifest themselves when we discuss his activities on the missionary journeys.

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7. F. W. Farrar, The Life and Work of St. Paul, p. 27.

Concerning the importance of the study of Paul's early training, Stalker remarks:

Paul would never have been the man he became or have done the work he did, if he had not in the years preceding his conversion gone through a course of preparation designed to fit him for his subsequent career. He knew not what he was being prepared for; his own intentions about his future were different from God's; but there is a divinity which shapes our ends, and it was making him a polished shaft for God's quiver, though he knew it not. 8

Under Gamaliel, Paul learned to become a zealous opponent to the new faith - Christianity. This hatred shown against the Christians and their doctrine was evidenced in his participation in the cruel persecutions which took place shortly after this in Jerusalem.

But we are chiefly concerned with the effects produced in Paul's mind and personality which he received during his years of training under Gamaliel. Three effects are particularly discernible: "candor and honesty of judgment, - a willingness to study and make use of Greek authors, - and a keen and watchful enthusiasm for the Jewish law." There is, however, one poignant factor in Paul's life without a knowledge of which we would not fully understand some of those definite traits that appear repeatedly in Paul's character. It is this, Paul was a Pharisee. In the following chapter, we shall view the Apostle as a Pharisee.

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8. Stalker, op. cit., p. 19.

9. Conybeare and Howson, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, p. 58. Vol. I.

## II. Saul the Pharisee

Upon reading the statement of Paul: "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee"(Acts 26, 5), one can well visualize the kind of life that lies behind that expression. As to the significant characteristics and customs of the Pharisees, Farrar states:

We know the minute and intense scrupulosity of Sabbath observance wasting itself in all those abhoth and toldoth - those primary and derivative rules and prohibitions, and inferences from rules and prohibitions, and combinations of inferences from rules and prohibitions, and cases of casuistry and conscience arising out of the infinite possible variety of circumstances to which those combinations of inference might apply - which had degraded the Sabbath from "a delight, holy of the Lord and honourable," partly into an anxious and pitiless burden, and partly into a network of contrivances hypocritically designed, as it were, in the lowest spirit of heathenism, to cheat the Deity with the mere semblance of accurate observance..... We know the tithings, at once troublesome and ludicrous, of mint, anise, and cummin, and the serio-comic questions as to whether in tithing the seed it was obligatory also to tithe the stalk. 1

The Pharisees were noted for their strict rules and observances. They had their double fasts of the week, the triple

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1. Farrar, op. cit., p. 35.

prayers each day, and also the frequent visits to the Temple. In respect to the vessels they practised extreme care in constantly rinsing and scouring them. The Pharisees carried this out to such an extent, that their rivals, the Sadducees remarked that they would wash the sun itself if they had the opportunity. From various instances in the Gospels one may learn a great deal concerning the Pharisees. They were known for their obtrusive prayers (Matt. 6,5), the ostentatious almsgivings (Matt. 6,2), the broadened phylacteries (Matt. 23,5), the professorial arrogance (John 7,49), the reckless proselytism (Matt. 23,15), the greedy avarice (Luke 20,47), the haughty assertion of preeminence (Luke 18,11), the ill-concealed hypocrisy (Matt. 22,17), which were often hidden under this venerable assumption of superior holiness.

What kind of Pharisee was Saul? Farrar in his unique manner categorized the various kinds of Pharisees and describes the group to which Saul belonged.

Of the seven kinds of Pharisees which the Talmud in various places enumerated, we may be quite sure that Saul of Tarsus would neither be a "bleeding" Pharisee, nor a "mortar" Pharisee, nor a "Shechemite" Pharisee, nor a "timid" Pharisee, nor a "tumbling" Pharisee, nor a "painted" Pharisee at all; but that the only class of Pharisee to which he, as a true and high-minded Israelite, would have borne any shadow of resemblance, and that not in a spirit of self-contentment, but in a spirit of almost morbid and feverish anxiety to do all that was commanded, would be the Tell-me-anything-more-to-do-and-I-will-do-it Pharisee! 2

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2. Farrar, op. cit., p. 36. For an explanation of the various kinds of Pharisees, cfr., Farrar, Life of Christ, p. 538.

From St. Paul's own words we learn that these years, during which he "lived a Pharisee," must have been very troubled years. As a Pharisee, he believed in eternity and the resurrection from the dead, he believed in angels and spirits, in voices and appearances. But in this struggle to attain righteousness before God, there seemed to be no help or hope. God seemed silent to him, and heaven remained closed. The experience of Saul of Tarsus was as heartrending as all those who have looked for peace and hope elsewhere than in the love of God through Christ Jesus. All that Luther suffered at Erfurt, under the influence of the priests and the traditions of the fathers, Saul must have suffered in Jerusalem. Even after these early years of weariness and struggling were over, we still read in his Epistles the mournful echoes of those days of trouble and turmoil.

This religious zeal which Paul in his training as a Pharisee acquired and which also dominated his entire being, manifested itself in his life as a Christian. It was that zeal and conscientiousness that helped to make Paul accomplish what he did on his missionary journeys. Of all the influences received by him as a Pharisee trained in the Rabbinical school was this religious zeal, this ancestral pride, that conscientious training in the Scriptures; and these were important factors in molding and shaping his later personality.

His well-rounded education, his religious ardor, and his ability as a leader were soon recognized by his fellows; for in the year 32, we find him again in Jerusalem, where he

probably prepared to take the position of rabbi in the synagogue. It was at this time that Christianity was growing in Jerusalem. The Pharisees and those Jews, who remained true to the teachings of the fathers, became bitter enemies of the Christians and the Christian teachings. The first action taken against Christianity is the stoning of Stephen (Acts 6 and 7). Saul was in league with those who disputed with Stephen and later stoned him. He was not directly involved with the actual stoning of Stephen, but we read that "the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul" (Acts 7, 58), and, "Saul was consenting unto his death (Acts 8, 1)."

When the persecution at Jerusalem became too severe, it is held that many of the Christian Jews fled to Damascus. The zealous Saul had now become an active agent in this opposition to Christianity. He could not rest. Those disciples of Jesus would corrupt the Jews at Damascus. Thereupon he received permission to travel to Damascus and bring these fleeing Nazarenes back and punish them. His religious zeal, believing the Messiah to be one who would come and reign as a temporal ruler, forced him in this conviction to destroy all who taught otherwise.



### III. Saul's Conversion and Early Activity

With his bill of arrest and men to aid him, Saul started his journey from Jerusalem to Damascus, a distance of nearly 150 miles. It was while traveling this long journey that he undoubtedly thought of the deeds committed in the past. Would he not wonder whether or not he might be in the wrong? But there was that Phariseeical pride which forbade him to examine seriously whether he might not after all be in the wrong. And so he continued until the journey was about to an end. Suddenly there appeared a blinding light around him. Saul fell to the earth trembling with fear. It was Jesus speaking to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" It was not he, the proud and haughty Saul, who was giving the command, but it was Christ whom he had been persecuting. Helpless and astonished he humbly asked what he was to do. The heavenly voice told him to arise and go to Damascus.

Saul arose a different man. He had fallen in death, and he now rose in life. What a changed man he had become in these few moments while groveling in the desert dust! This incident

left such an indelible impression upon the remainder of St. Paul's life, that time and time again he makes reference to his conversion in his Epistles and also in his public addresses. That spirit of arrogant pride was transformed into a spirit of deep humility. He was led into the city for he was blind from this vision. How utterly different his entry now from the one he had anticipated. Three days he had to wait in total darkness. Three long days in which he would reflect the evils of the past, but also rejoice in the glory of his conversion.

Thus did Saul the persecutor become Saul the soldier of the Cross. He had been called to the Apostleship by Christ himself..... and the investiture (for it must be regarded as all one transaction) was now completed by Ananias, by baptism and the laying-on of hands, and the communication of the Holy Spirit. Henceforth the indomitable zeal, which had been heretofore displayed (with what vain efforts!) to the destruction of the faith, was to be exerted for its propagation. The scales had fallen from his intellectual sight, and his life, from this time till the day when he laid his head upon the block, was to be one unbroken series of toil and suffering, of contempt of the world and defiance and danger, of struggles, through good report and evil report, to the crown of everlasting glory. 1

Thus did God choose him who was His enemy to become His primary tool in the building of Christianity of the early New Testament era. But why should the Lord choose such an one who was so hateful to the Gospel instead of the disciples who were with Him personally? The ways of the Lord are mysterious, we know, and far past finding out. But with Stalker we can safely say that none of the original group was equal to this emer-

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1. Thomas Lewin, The Life and Epistles of St. Paul, Vol. I, page 54.

gency.

They were Galilean fishermen, fit enough to teach within the bounds of their native Palestine. But beyond Palestine lay the great world of Greece and Rome - the world of vast populations, of power and culture, of pleasure and business. It needed a man of unlimited versatility, of education, of immense human sympathy and breadth, to go out there with the gospel message; a man who could not only be a Jew to the Jews, but a Greek to the Greeks, a Roman to the Romans, a barbarian to the barbarians; a man who could encounter not only rabbis in their synagogues, but proud magistrates in their courts and philosophers in the haunts of learning; a man who could face travel by land and by sea, who could exhibit presence of mind in every variety of circumstances, and would be cowed by no difficulties. No man of this size belonged to the original apostolic circle; but Christianity needed such a one, and he was found in Paul. 2

Immediately after he was baptized, Paul began to preach the Gospel in Damascus. He felt the all-importance of this business of preaching Christ who had called him out of darkness into His marvelous light. Already we see the most pronounced trait of his personality manifesting itself in his eagerness to preach the Gospel. But these days of preaching in Damascus were short-lived. The Jews were astounded. They knew why he had come. And now he was boldly preaching the doctrine of those Christians, whom he came to destroy. Paul's life was in danger, therefore he left the city. Conscious of his divine mission, he never felt that it was necessary to consult "those Apostles before him, but went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus," (Gal. 1,17).

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2. Stalker, op. cit., p. 15.

Three years he spent in Arabia. Three years of his life in which no specific mention of his activity is made. Just why he went there we do not know. But we may conclude with considerable certainty that he went into retirement to grasp in thought those details and bearings of the divine revelation of which he had been put into possession.<sup>3</sup> What thoughts must have passed through his changed mind during these years of solitude! Here in Arabia, he undoubtedly looked back upon his life; how he had been given over so zealously, so conscientiously to the Jewish tradition; how the pictures of those dying Christians he had put to death seemed to tear at his mind. But he was brought to the knowledge of the truth. He felt the love of Jesus, who had come down from heaven, so to speak, to stop him from following the road to perdition. Jesus had given him back his forfeited life and placed him in that position which had always appeared to him the prize of life. He could not but put himself at His service with all his efforts. That burning Phariseeical zeal; that boldness; that courage; that conscientiousness; that wisdom and sound education; that pride; that sincerity would be used to their fullest powers in the service of the Savior of all mankind. Brought to a full understanding of real humility, patience, tenderness, and sympathy through his conversion to Christianity, Paul now dedicated his life to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was

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3. Stalker, op. cit., p. 52.

chosen to use these God-given endowments of personality in the promulgation of this privilege. This was his sincere and bold conviction that led him henceforth through trials and persecutions, through storms and stonings, to his end in Rome; this masterpiece of Christian confession: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."<sup>4</sup>

We have briefly discussed the formative influences of Paul's personality, which have expressed themselves in various traits in his latter life and which have become a potent factor in his success as a missionary. In the following pages each personality trait will reveal itself as we follow Paul in his journeys.

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4. Rom. 1, 16.

#### IV. The First Missionary Journey

The next we hear of Paul is that he "returned again unto Damascus." (Gal. 1,17) Here he preached the Gospel with much fervor. He knew that, no sooner would he begin to preach Christ crucified, the Jews would seek to destroy him as he himself had previously done to the Christians. But he felt that he was born to be an apostle, a missionary, and an evangelist. He designated himself as one "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." (1 Cor. 1,1) "Necessity is laid upon me," he says, "yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel." (1 Cor. 9,16) The matter demanded haste, and he set himself to the task with eager interest and unquenchable zeal. Danger or no danger, he had a duty to perform. And with the zeal and ever-readiness that was typically Paul, he boldly and courageously began to preach.

It wasn't long when the Jews began to take action against him. Paul was immediately sent out of the city by his friends, who lowered him from a window outside the city gates in order that he could escape safely. Now already Paul had a foresight

of the life he was to lead in order to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. So soon, as he writes later, he experienced "perils by his own countrymen, and perils in the city;" already "in journeyings often, in weariness and painfulness," (2 Cor. 11, 26.27) he began to learn "how great things he was to suffer" (Acts 9,16) for the name of Christ. Now he fled to Jerusalem. What feelings must have attended his approach to Jerusalem. As he drew near the gates, he might have passed by the spot where he had so exultingly assisted in the stoning of Stephen, but he entered perfectly content, were it God's will, to be dragged out through them to the same fate. Yet, not without grief and awe could he look upon that city of his forefathers, over which he now knew that the judgment of God was impending. And not without sad emotions could one of so tender a nature think of the alienation of those who had been his warmest associates. The sanguine hopes, however, springing from his own honest convictions, and his fervent zeal to communicate the truth to others, predominated his mind.<sup>1</sup>

Thus "he attempted to join himself to the disciples of Christ." But as the Jews hated him, so the Christians suspected him. It was not until Barnabas came forward and introduced him to the apostles that he was admitted into their group. He conferred with the Apostles; particularly Peter and James. And as in Damascus, he "disputed among the Grecians." Paul

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1. cfr., Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 102.

just was not the type of man to rest; he had to make known the Truth. It would have been very easy for him, now that he knew the way to salvation, to go about quietly and avoid all the suffering which was awaiting him. But that innate zeal, fervor, and boldness would not allow him to rest; no, not for a moment. Therefore, out he went, fearlessly preaching and teaching. Here, again, as in Damascus, they sought ways and means to take his life. But the apostles sent him to the home of his childhood. He probably was quite reluctant to leave, but the Lord had cut him out for a much wider field. One day as he was praying in the Temple, he fell into a trance and saw Jesus, who spoke to him and said that he should quickly depart out of Jerusalem for he was to be sent to the Gentiles (Acts 22, 17-21). The scene of his apostolic victories was not to be Jerusalem.

Here in Tarsus, Paul spent eight years of which we have no record of his activity. In his last residence he was a Jew, and not only a Jew, but a Pharisee; and he looked on the Gentiles around him as outcasts from the favor of God. Now he was a Christian, and not only a Christian, but a missionary conscious of his mission to the Gentiles. The Lord Jesus had appeared to him personally on the Damascus road, and three times thereafter in a vision, with the message that he was to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. We could hardly think of Paul, babbling over with anxiety to announce the good news, spending these important years doing nothing. Now at least,



if not before in his life, we may be sure that he would have come into active intercourse with the heathen philosophers of the region. He would prepare to argue with them on their own ground. Whether he was successful or not we do not know. At any rate, he was preparing for the future; and we will, in the following chapter, see Paul making a bold stand against the heathen philosophers at Athens. Paul was full of zeal, his heart was warm with love and compassion for those poor blind heathen souls, and he undoubtedly preached and taught the Gospel to his fellow-countrymen.

After the vision of Peter, and after a group of missionaries had come to Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, and were successful, the apostles at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas first sought out Paul; and they labored zealously in Antioch. Soon these two associates went to Jerusalem to bring the people of Judea a collection of food and money. Back again in Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas met with the other apostles, and it was not long when they returned to Antioch. From there they were sent by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13,2) on the first great missionary journey.

They left Antioch, and, after passing through Seleucia, sailed for the island of Cyprus. John Mark accompanied them on this journey. After they docked at Salamis, they immediately went to the synagogue of the Jews and preached the Word of God. This was new territory for Paul and he did not shrink at the thought of falling into trouble; he rather went boldly

ahead, for his heart was filled with a passionate zeal to bring the message of salvation to anyone with whom he came into contact. It is of particular interest to note that the first thing mentioned upon his entering a city is that he would seek a synagogue.<sup>2</sup> This was Paul's method throughout his entire ministry. It was this aggressiveness, this seeking every opportune moment to preach that was a predominate characteristic in Paul.

At Paphos, Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, was in charge, and with him lived a Jewish impostor named Bar-Jesus (better known as Elymas the Sorcerer). Sergius Paulus, upon hearing of the presence of Paul and Barnabas, called them to him so that he could hear their doctrine. Elymas, who was in good standing with Sergius Paulus, thought that these strangers would influence the Proconsul with their teaching. The thought of losing his distinguished and lucrative position was too much for him and he met the apostles in open controversy. And, as Farrar states, he spared neither argument nor insult in his endeavor to persuade Sergius Paulus of the absurdity of the new faith. Instantly Paul came to the front to bear the full force of the sorcerer's opposition. A less convinced or less courageous man might well have shrunk from individual collision

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2. In the worship of the synagogue, after the prayers and the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the manuscript was rolled up and returned to the Chazin (Luke 4,20). Then followed a pause during which strangers or learned men, who had "any word of consolation" or exhortation, rose and addressed the meeting. Cfr., Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 173.

with a personage who evidently occupied a position of high consideration in the immediate household of the noble Roman. But to a spirit like St. Paul's, while there could be infinite compassion for ignorance, infinite sympathy with infirmity, infinite tenderness towards penitence, there could, on the other hand, be no compromise with imposture, and no tolerance for insolence.<sup>3</sup> Paul's soul waxed hot. He came down upon the loquacious cheat without mercy. In glowing indignation he boldly went up to Elymas and fastened his flashing eyes on the culprit and told him plainly what he was (Acts 13,10). Then in a solemn tone, Paul pronounced the punishment of the Lord upon him. Elymas was to be blind. The denunciation instantly took effect; the sorcerer felt in a moment that his impostures were annihilated, and that he stood in the presence of the justice of God.

This blinding of the false prophet opened the eyes of Sergius Paulus. What manner of man was this, who so boldly and with such indignation denounced this sorcerer and made him blind? This thought and many others must have run through the perplexed mind of the Roman Proconsul. Whether or not he was baptized into the Christian faith we are not told. "But we cannot doubt that when the Proconsul was converted, his influence would make Christianity reputable; and that from this moment the Gentiles of the island, as well as the Jews, had the news of salvation brought home to them."<sup>4</sup>

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3. Cfr., Farrar, op. cit., p. 199.

4. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 149.

Paul and Barnabas had prospered so much in the island of Cyprus, that they now proposed to enter upon a wider field, and transfer their labors to the opposite continent. Asia Minor was a much different field than Cyprus. But the vastness of the field, the variations of languages, the influence of heathen philosophers, the persecution that would be encountered, the opposition of the Judaizers seemed to Paul but small obstacles. He felt the hand of God guiding him onward; he knew Christ's promise: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He had just experienced with the help of God, an overwhelming success in the island of Cyprus, and now, with renewed zeal and boldness, with deep love and sympathy for his fellow-men and the ignorant heathen, Paul set sail for Perga in Pamphylia.

John Mark, who was travelling with Paul and Barnabas, left them at Perga and returned to Jerusalem. There must have been a feeling of indignation in Paul's heart at the desertion and defection of Mark, when at the very moment he could have been least replaced, and when the difficulties which he could so greatly have lightened began to assume their most formidable shape.<sup>5</sup> It seems that Paul had suddenly taken ill at Perga and deemed it necessary to go into the higher regions of the country to regain his strength.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Cfr., Farrar, op. cit., p. 202.

6. Cfr., W. Arndt's notes on New Testament Introduction, p. 8; also W. Ramsay, St. Paul the Traveler, p. 92-94. Note: Gal. 4, 13 ff.

At any rate, they came to Antioch and on the Sabbath went to the synagogue. Paul, again, takes every opportunity that he can seize to preach the Gospel "to the Jew first; then also to the Greek." (Rom. 1,16) In the speech which followed, we have a remarkable expression of Paul's personality and individuality. St. Paul's power as a speaker is shown in this address. R. Tuck, in his exposition of this speech as found in the Pulpit Commentary, says:

His power lay in the intensity of his views; and in his strong sympathy with his audience, which made him quick to adapt himself to them, and so to press home his thought. In this address we may notice: 1. His characteristic attitude, standing up and beckoning with the hand (ch. 17,22; 21,40; 23,1; 26,1). 2. His conciliatory introductions: he always strives first to be sure of a common platform with his audience. 3. His skill in dealing with the early histories; which served his purpose in two ways - (1) by securing the attention of his Jewish audiences, which are to this day always pleased with reviews of the national history; and (2) by bringing out the preparatory character of the earlier dispensation, and fitting his gospel message to it as a completion..... and his force of passionate pleading and application of the truth to individuals, as shown in Acts 13, 40.41. 7

St. Paul also knew that there was a general sentiment concerning John the Baptist, and he prudently takes advantage of it showing how John gave his indirect and direct witness to the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth.

When the address was completed, many Jews and Gentiles that believed followed Paul to hear more. He did not turn away from <sup>e</sup>them telling them to come back the next Sabbath to

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7. H. Spence and J. Exell, The Pulpit Commentary ( the Acts of the Apostles, Vol. I), p. 433.

hear more; Paul wasn't that type; instead he and Barnabas continued to speak to them "persuading them to continue in the grace of God." (Acts 13,43) Such was the love which Paul had for people; such was, by the grace of God, the power of his influence upon these people. The next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the Word of God (Acts 13, 44). But when they heard that this Messiah was also to "lighten the Gentiles," they flew into a rage and vehemently opposed Paul and Barnabas and stirred up the devout women and chief men of the city to persecute them. Both Paul and Barnabas, in spite of the impending danger, boldly preached and courageously remained there until they were expelled from the city.

The same thing occurred in Iconium. But here they persevered and lingered for some considerable time standing fearlessly before the hateful mobs. "It must have taken no small amount of courage to stand up in a Jewish synagogue as he did and, by an appeal to the resurrection of Jesus after his condemnation by the Jews, prove that the Jewish national leaders had been vanquished and the old system superseded by a new era of freedom." <sup>8</sup> Paul's was such a spirit, so conscientious and full of religious zeal, that he did not leave until the Jews attempted to stone him.

At Lystra, the experience of Paul and Barnabas was alto-

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8. B. W. Robinson, The Life of Paul, p. 82.

gether different from any other they had ever encountered. Here we find Paul's personality manifesting itself in various ways. The first incident is that of the cripple. Paul saw the sincerity of the man, and with a heart full of compassion and sympathy, he healed the poor cripple. This sympathetic nature of Paul is shown many times throughout his life and also with his dealings with people. His was a nature that was compassionate in the full-toned sense of the word. Jefferson gives a good exposition of the sympathetic nature of Paul's personality in the following statement:

He felt with men below him, and also with men above him. His heart went out to peasants and also to kings. He had an experiencing nature. He penetrated the lives of others. He lived a thousand lives and died a thousand deaths. It was his intense sympathy which caused him to bleed when his converts suffered. 9

It was this warm feeling for these people to whom he preached the Gospel which also he showed when he healed the poor cripple. Robinson adds concerning this very case:

It is not hard to understand how Paul may at times, through the force of his own personality and with the aid of the power of faith in Christ, have relieved such cases. Luke's interest seems to have been chiefly in the power exhibited, while for students of the life of Paul the account contains also an instructive suggestion of the personal side of Paul's work. Like Jesus he turned aside at any time to help the poor and the helpless and others whom he found in trouble (cf. 1 Thess. 2, 11; Acts 20, 31). 10

With reference to the above statement by Robinson, it

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9. Charles Jefferson, The Character of Paul, p. 248.  
 10. Robinson, op. cit., p. 86.

is to be noted that his apparent attempt to explain the cure in a natural way cannot be sanctioned.

When the people of the city heard that a miracle was done, they cried out, "The gods are come down upon us in the likeness of men." (Acts 14,11) Barnabas was called Jupiter, and Paul was given the name of Mercury. From these appellations, we are given some hint as to the stature and characteristics of these two apostles. It is very possible that Barnabas was older, and therefore more venerable in appearance than St. Paul.<sup>11</sup> Whereas Paul, like Mercury, the messenger of the gods, was shorter, quick of foot, and quick of eye.<sup>12</sup> He was the spokesman, and the active one of the two.

As soon as Paul and Barnabas heard that they were called gods by these ignorant and superstitious people, they rent their clothes in a sudden emotional outburst of their indignation, and ran out among the people telling them that they weren't gods, but were mortals and human beings. It is in this particular incident that Paul's tactfulness and presence of mind is exemplified. The diplomatic manner he employed was that he merely scratched the surface of thought and forced these people to dig for the rest. It seemed to them a compliment, and yet Paul was in the meantime guiding their line of thinking. "As a wise and careful missionary he appeals to the knowledge of natural religion, in order to build upon it

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11. Cfr., Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., n. 6, p. 192.

12. Cfr., Robinson, op. cit., p. 87.



the beauty of revealed religion,"<sup>13</sup> when he says to these inhabitants of Lystra, "Sirs, why do ye these things (idolizing us)? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." (Acts 14,15) He goes on with the same idea in mind, "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." "This was a tactful, yet none the less impressive reminder of the fact that they had not been guiltless in times past since God's presence was always near."<sup>14</sup>

We cannot but pause to observe the essentially Pauline character which this speech manifests, even in so condensed a summary of its contents. It is full of undesigned coincidences in argument, and even in the expression employed, with St. Paul's language in other parts of the Acts and his own Epistles. Thus, as here he declares the object of his preaching to be that the idolatrous Lystrians should "turn from these vain idols to the living God," so he reminds the Thessalonians how they, at his preaching, had "turned from idols to serve the living and true God."<sup>15</sup> Then too, it is of interest to note how striking is the similarity between the natural theology with which the present speech concludes, and

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13. P. E. Kretzmann, Popular Commentary of the Bible, (the New Testament, Vol. I), p. 604.

14. Ibid.

15. The coincidence is more striking in the Greek, because the very same verb ἐπιτρέπειν is used in each passage (1 Thess. 1,9).

that in the Epistle to the Romans, where, speaking of the heathen, he says that atheists were without excuse (Rom. 1,19.20).

The people's feelings were soon changed to the opposite by a number of Jews from Iconium and Antioch, who made it their business to try to destroy what the apostles were building. A sudden revolution ensued, and Paul was stoned and cast out of the city apparently dead. "Such were the scenes of excitement and peril through which they had to pass in this remote region. But their enthusiasm never flagged; they never thought of turning back, but, when they were driven out of one city, moved forward to another." <sup>16</sup> Paul never left a city without leaving behind a little band of converts - perhaps a few Jews, a few more proselytes, and a number of Gentiles. Even here at Lystra, where the defeat seemed so pronounced, a little faithful group gathered around the bleeding and mangled body outside the city gates. Perhaps there was Eunice and Lois and also young Timothy, who later became a co-worker of Paul's, and whose heart felt forever knit to the hero who had the courage to suffer to the death for his faith.

From Lystra, Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe, and there they established a Christian congregation. The people of Galatia loved Paul, because Paul had shown such love and affection toward them. And when he had finished his course here in Derbe and the way lay open for him to go back to Tarsus and Antioch, he preferred to return by the way he had come.

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16. Stalker, op. cit., p. 83.

"In spite of the most imminent danger he revisited all these places, to see his dear converts again and cheer them in the face of persecution; and he ordained elders in every city to watch over the churches in his absence."<sup>17</sup> This, indeed, shows Paul's deep concern and love for his converts. He boldly and courageously faced the dangers of persecutions in this return journey, but his love for these converted souls was of far greater value to him than persecution, and it was a "must" that he return to them again.

But his love does not halt at the outer frontiers of personal friendship. He loves all Christian believers. He loves the Churches. They are his children. He loves every person in them. He carries them all in his heart. A church is a company of lovers. In Christian fellowship he finds his highest satisfactions and rewards. To the Church in Corinth he writes: "My heart is wide open for you." To the Church in Philippi he writes: "I cherish love and longing for you. You are my joy and crown." To the Church in Thessalonica he writes: "Who is our hope, our joy, our crown of pride? Why you, you are our glory and joy." The Church is rooted and grounded in love..... "Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it," and so also did Paul. 18

In the last analysis, it is his love for Jesus, that accounts for all his virtues, and explains his entire career. It is this warm affection and deep love that was particularly characteristic of Paul's personality throughout his entire missionary activities - to the end of his life.

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17. Stalker, op. cit., p. 85.

18. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 330.

## V. The Second Missionary Journey

The second missionary journey originated in a desire expressed by Paul to Barnabas, that they should revisit all the cities where they had preached the Gospel and founded churches.<sup>1</sup> Paul felt that he must be active. He was too zealous and restless to remain in one place now that he had made contacts with other peoples. He was very much concerned about those souls. And as a careful physician he felt that those whose recovery from sin had been begun, might be in danger of a relapse; therefore he says, "Come let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."<sup>2</sup> We notice here again "a trace of that tender solicitude concerning his converts, that earnest longing to behold their faces, which ap-

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1. Acts 15, 36.

2. There is much force in the particle  $\delta\eta$ , which is almost unnoticed by the commentators. It seems to express something like impatience, especially when we compare it with the words  $\mu\epsilon\tau\alpha\ \tau\iota\upsilon\alpha\varsigma\ \eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$ , which precede. The tender feeling implied in the phrase  $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\upsilon\omicron\upsilon\iota$  fully justifies what has been said. Concerning this footnote, cfr., Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., n. 9, p. 250.

pears in the letters which he wrote afterwards, as one of the most remarkable, and one of the most attractive, features of his character."<sup>3</sup>

This plan, however, was marred by an outbreak of human infirmity. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along on this journey, but Paul refused to take him. Here we have a contrast of personality between Paul and Barnabas. Farrar makes the following distinctions:

Each was like himself. St. Barnabas may have suffered himself too strongly to be influenced by partially for a relative; St. Paul by the memory of personal indignation. Barnabas may have erred on the side of leniency; Paul on the side of sternness. St. Paul's was so far the worst fault, yet the very fault may have risen from his loftier ideal. There was a "severe earnestness" about him, a sort of intense whole-heartedness, which could make no allowance whatever for one who, at the very point at which dangers began to thicken, deserted a great and sacred work.<sup>4</sup>

This sudden burst of harshness and indignation over against Mark, which was the result of Mark's earlier defection, did not break the friendship of these three men. For the time came when Paul himself acknowledged, with affectionate tenderness, not only that Mark had again become his fellow laborer,<sup>5</sup> but that he was "profitable to the ministry,"<sup>6</sup> and one of the causes of his own "comfort."<sup>7</sup> This little

3. Conybeare & Howson, op. cit., p. 250.

4. Farrar, op. cit., p. 255. See also footnote 1, where Farrar quotes Chrysostom, who declares: Ὁ Παῦλος ἐβήτει τὸ δίκαιον, ὁ Βαρνάβας τὸ φιλόνητον.

5. Philemon 24.

6. 2 Tim. 4, 11.

7. Col. 4, 10. 11.

incident certainly describes the human side of Paul. From it we learn that he was impetuous, conscientious, and resolute in his opinion; yet, he never let the sun go down on his flare of wrath, for we can quite correctly conclude that these three great men parted as good friends and forgot this argument with a true Christian spirit.

At Lystra, Paul singled out Timothy and chose him as a fellow-worker in the field. The Apostle's heart seems to have been drawn towards him with peculiar tenderness. This feeling is in harmony with all we read, in the Acts and the Epistles, of St. Paul's affectionate and confiding disposition. He prudently chose Timothy to work in the synagogues, because his mother was a Jewess and his father was a Greek.<sup>8</sup> Paul had Timothy circumcized. In doing this, was Paul inconsistent? He could not have done otherwise if he acted with his usual far-sighted caution and deliberation. Had Timothy not been circumcized, a storm would have gathered round the Apostle in his further progress. Paul was aware of this, therefore it was performed as a voluntary act, and simply on prudential grounds.<sup>9</sup> Again we see St. Paul's characteristic manner of level-headedness and prudence in handling delicate situations such as this one.

At Philippi, the Apostles found an altogether different

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8. Acts 16, 1.

9. Conybeare & Howson, op. cit., p. 267.

type of people. Since there were only a few Jews there, Paul and Silas had no trouble with them and their Judaism. Here they were dealing with Gentiles - Greeks, and Paul began his ministry among them in a very tactful manner. He did not force himself upon them by demanding audience, but he went about conversing with the people whom he met. His activity and his method here was very much similar to that of Jesus when He journeyed throughout Palestine. The results were marvelous. The Philippians were heart-whole in their Christian faith and St. Paul's entire Epistle to them breathes of joy, affection, and gratitude. It was while preaching in Philippi that Paul was annoyed by a female slave who was possessed with a spirit of divination. For several days she followed Paul and Silas crying out that they were men of the most high God. Paul became indignant with her actions, and yet he had compassion on her. Out of pity for this poor victim of demoniac power and "commanded the evil spirit to come out of her." His heart was filled with that deep sympathy for this poor heathen slave as it was for the cripple in Lystra. Many would have ridiculed this demoniac, but not Paul. He had come over to Macedonia to help these people, for to the Greek he became as a Greek, hence his tender heart bled for these benighted souls. Jefferson, in his account of Paul's sympathetic nature as shown in the incident with the woman possessed with a spirit of divination, makes the following remark:

If we seek an explanation of this astonishing and unflinching sympathy, we must look for it in the fulness of his humanity. Human nature was strong in him. He had in him not one man only, but many men. The Jew was in him, but the Greek was in him too, and the Roman also, and so were men of many other lands..... In his heart were the thoughts and feelings, the affinities and antipathies, the agreements and the contradictions of our common nature. He carried within him the streams of pride and passion, fear and joy, hate and love which lie deep in all men's souls. Because all the currents of impulse and inclination, aspiration and yearning were mighty in him, he could enter into the souls of others. The life he loved opened up in his heart new fountains of sympathetic feeling. Because he had suffered so much himself, he knew how to enter into the sufferings of others. 10

But his tenderness and compassion upon this woman, brought hatred into the hearts of those men in whose service she had been employed. They had these Jews, Paul and Silas, scourged and imprisoned. Instead of murmuring and complaining, Paul and Silas had learned, "in whatever state they were, therewith to be content." <sup>11</sup> With heroic cheerfulness they solaced the long black hours of midnight with prayer and hymns. It is this cheerfulness and joyfulness in the hour of suffering that makes Paul so eminent. It is Paul who wrote: "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, and necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak then I am strong." <sup>12</sup> He was so filled with love and trust in Jesus, who had brought him to light, that he could rightly say: "I can do all things through Christ which

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10. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 255.

11. Phil. 4, 11.

12. 2 Cor. 12, 10.



strengtheneth me." <sup>13</sup> Whenever we are in Paul's presence, we hear the sound of trumpets. He blows a blast which makes us forget the weary marches and the bleeding wounds, and fills us with dreams of victory.

And so while he is sorrowful, he is always rejoicing. These hymns of gladness certainly must have had their effect upon the other prisoners. Now suddenly there was an earthquake; the prisoners' bands were loosed; and the doors were thrown open. The jailer, terrified at this spectacle and at the thought of being executed ignominiously, would have taken his own life had not Paul stopped him. We see the Apostle here self-possessed in the earthquake, as he was afterwards in the storm at sea, <sup>14</sup> able to gain the respect and control of those who were placed over him, and calmly turning the occasion to a spiritual end. The jailer was converted, he and his whole house.

The next morning the magistrates sent them permission to leave their dungeon. But Paul and Silas stood fast to their right of citizenship. St. Paul wisely demanded that these magistrates, who acted against the Roman law, come and release them personally. Here again, Paul's clear judgment and level-headedness reveals itself. Concerning the entire behavior of Paul during this incident, Conybeare and Howson declare:

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13. Phil. 4, 13.

14. Acts 27, 20 - 25.

The whole narrative of St. Paul's imprisonment at Philippi sets before us in striking colors his clear judgment and presence of mind. He might have escaped by help of the earthquake and under the shelter of the darkness; but this would have been to depart as a runaway slave. He would not do secretly what he knew he ought to be allowed to do openly. By such a course his own character and that of the Gospel would have been disgraced, the jailer would have been cruelly left to destruction, and all religious influence over the other prisoners would have been gone. As regards these prisoners, his influence over them was like the sway he obtained over the crew in the sinking vessel. It was so great, that not one of them attempted to escape. And not only in the prison, but in the whole town of Philippi, Christianity was placed on a high vantage-ground by the Apostle's conduct that night. 15

Concerning Paul's prudent action in demanding that the officials come personally to set them free, Robinson states that Paul could have a further reason for this action. He says: "It is possible that Paul and Silas made this demand, not merely to vindicate themselves before their fellow-prisoners, but also to protect the converted jailer; for the magistrates, learning of his conversion, might later have blamed the jailer for the escape of the apostles and have deprived him of his position." <sup>16</sup> According to this conjecture, we see again Paul's deep concern for his neighbor. Nevertheless, this incident shows how Paul so prudently and calmly conducted himself in such an unpremeditated circumstance. They did not leave the city immediately, but boldly, and not unmindful of their dignity and self-possession, proceeded to the homes of their Christian converts and bade

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15. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 311.

16. Robinson, op. cit., p. 122.

them all farewell first.

At Thessalonica Paul preached in the synagogue for three Sabbaths in succession. It might have been expected that the outrage at Philippi, and its still lingering effects, would have dampened his zeal, and made him shrink from another persecution. But, fresh as he was from such pain and anguish, he carried on his discussions with undiminished force<sup>17</sup> and courage.

We see him endeavoring to win no converts by flattering words (1 Thess. 2, 5). We see him rebuking and admonishing his converts with all the faithfulness of a father to his children (1 Thess. 2, 11), and cherishing them with all the affection of a mother for the infant in her bosom (1 Thess. 2, 7). We see in this Apostle at Thessalonica all the devotion of a friend who is ready to devote his life for those whom he loves (1 Thess. 2, 8), all the watchfulness of the faithful pastor, to whom "each one" of his flock is the separate object of individual care.<sup>18</sup>

From the First Epistle to the Thessalonians we learn of a number of those personality traits which St. Paul manifested while ministering to these people. In this Epistle, the Apostle dwells much on his own bearing and example among them (1 Thess. 1,6; 2,10); the boldness which he showed in spite of the present opposition and the past persecutions (1 Thess. 2,2); the simplicity and sincerity which enabled him to appeal to them as witnesses to the Gospel (1 Thess. 2,8-14; 3,9.10; 5,14-28); the independence which he maintained (1 Thess. 2,3-6); the self-sacrificing tenderness which he

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17. Farrar, op. cit., p. 288. Cfr. also; 1 Thess. 2, 2.

18. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 328.

had showed; the incessant severity of his industry (1 Thess. 2,6; 3,7; 2 Thess. 3,8-10); the blameless purity of his life.<sup>19</sup> Paul and Silas dealt wisely, conscientiously, and courageously with the people of Thessalonica. Although exposed to opposition and persecution, Paul remained unmoved, and zealously and cheerfully preached salvation through Christ Jesus.

"St. Paul came to Athens, and found it full of idols - something which angered the Jew in him. As usual, he attempted to gain influence in the synagogue over the Jews and God-fearers, and in the market place (Agora) over any and all who would gather there."<sup>20</sup> Here, in this idolatrous city, he saw statues erected in honor of the many Greek gods. He burned with zeal for that God whom he saw dishonored on every side. He was acquainted with their philosophy already from his youth, and it must have grieved his soul to see these people given over to such ignorance in worship. One is struck with admiration as he studies the manner in which Paul addressed these sages and philosophers. It is particularly interesting how Paul applied a little psychology in drawing their attention to one particular altar. On this altar was inscribed the words: "To The Unknown God." Since these philosophers were anxious to hear from this stranger with a new doctrine, Paul made use of this opportunity and delivered a lengthy speech,

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19. 1 Thess. 2,10: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holy and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."

20. Klausner, op. cit., p. 377.

which he began by commending the Athenians. He was a diplomat. And he opened his speech in a positive note by saying that they were a religious people. Paul prudently set the stage.<sup>21</sup> The minds of his auditors were receptive. Now was the opportune moment to preach to them God the Father, the Creator of the world, and Jesus, His Son, who came into the world to redeem the world. Conybeare and Howson describe this particular incident, showing Paul's tact and wisdom, in the following passage:

He was brought into a position, when he might easily have been ensnared into the use of words, which would have brought down upon him the indignation of all the city. Had he begun by attacking the national gods in the midst of their sanctuaries, and with the Areo-

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21. Concerning Paul's prudent action taken here at the Areopagus, Lyttleton, who quotes from Josephus, points out clearly the condition of the Athenian state from which Paul wisely escaped persecution. From the following statement, we shall be able better to understand the reason why Paul acted in the manner which he did. Lyttleton declares: "There was at Athens a law which made it capital to introduce or teach any new gods in their state. Therefore when Paul was preaching 'Jesus and the Resurrection' to the Athenians, some of them carried him before the court of the Areopagus (the ordinary judges of criminal matters, and in a particular manner entrusted with the care of religion), as having broken this law, and being 'a setter forth of strange gods.' Now in this case an impostor would have retracted his doctrine to save his life, and an enthusiast would have lost his life without trying to save it by innocent means. St. Paul did neither the one nor the other; he availed himself of an altar which he had found in the city, inscribed 'to the unknown God,' and pleaded that he did not propose to them the worship of any new God, but only explained to them the one whom their government had already received; 'Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.' By this he avoided the law, and escaped being condemned by the Areopagus, without departing in the least from the truth of the Gospel or violating the honour of God; and an admirable proof, in my opinion, of the good sense with which he acted, and one that shows there was no mixture of fanaticism in his religion."

pagites on the seats near him, he would have been in almost as great danger as Socrates before him. Yet he not only avoids the snare, but uses the very difficulty of his position to make a road to the convictions of those who heard him. He becomes a heathen to the heathen..... And if the speech is characterized by St. Paul's prudence, it is marked by that wisdom of his Divine Master, which is the pattern of all Christian teaching. 22

He spoke to them from the fullness of his heart, which overflowed with tenderness and sympathy for these unenlightened Athenians. They walked out when he spoke of the resurrection, yet a few remained behind to hear more. Perhaps he wasn't successful on this particular day, but we can quite safely assume that he influenced them nevertheless. This was Paul's first direct clash with Paganism and it stands as an imperishable monument of the first victory of Christianity over Paganism.

In Corinth we see an altogether different Paul. He came there a discredited and dispirited man. To use his own words, he began in "weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."<sup>23</sup> It seems as though all the fire and zeal had been taken out of him by the blows showered upon him in the preceding weeks. But Paul knew the type of people with whom he had to deal. "Corinth was a mongrel and heterogeneous population of Greek adventurers and Roman bourgeois, with a tainted infusion of Phoenicians, Jews, ex-soldiers, philosophers, merchants, sai-

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22. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 377.

23. 1 Cor. 2, 3.

lors, slaves, hucksters, and agents of every form of vice - a colony without aristocracy, without traditions, without well-established citizens."<sup>24</sup> In the midst of such a populace, Paul desired to preach the Gospel. It wasn't that Paul had lost his zeal for preaching, but he came to Corinth alone, and in all humility he undoubtedly hesitated to undertake this arduous task which now confronted him. He therefore spent his first days at Corinth prudently preparing for any outburst of opposition which would come later. He contacted a small group of fellow-workers, and in so doing, gained their confidence and friendship.

It was not until Timothy and Silas finally came to him that Paul took courage. They brought a collection from Macedonia. Now he no longer had to work with his own hands for his livelihood. Paul was human and <sup>had</sup> his weak moments. And it was particularly here at Corinth, that we find Paul treading lightly while waiting for his two colleagues to come and to uphold and substantiate his preaching. His work here was not easy, and refreshed by the Holy Spirit's encouragement,<sup>25</sup> he zealously and fearlessly expounded the Scriptures in the synagogues and also throughout the city. The two Epistles which he wrote to the Church at Corinth, show with what earnestness, conscientiousness, and affection he preached the Gospel to them. He tells them, I "came not with excellency

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24. Farrar, op. cit., p. 315.

25. Acts 18, 9 - 11.

of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.<sup>26</sup> It was with such a spirit, by the grace of God, that the Apostle Paul made astounding progress on his second journey. There was not a locality where Paul had preached and labored that a congregation was not founded, or, that a number of people were converted to the Christian faith. This journey exemplifies the influence that the Apostle exerted on his converts. They loved him dearly, and all begged him to remain with them. "The fact that he was loved is proof that he was lovable. If he had not been lovable, he would not have been loved. He made men love him simply by being himself."<sup>27</sup>

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26. 1 Cor. 2, 1.2.

27. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 361.



## VI. The Third Missionary Journey

Paul's second missionary journey was one of trials and persecutions, spattered with instances of physical sickness and bitter attacks on his spirituality. He had hardly recovered from these crosses of anguish and trouble, when he launched forward with that indomitable zeal on another visit to the congregations he had established, only to encounter more dangers and trials. His endurance enabled him, the most physically weak of the apostles,<sup>1</sup> to become the most ceaselessly active. The high conviction that God had called him to a special Apostolate "to make the Gentiles obedient by word and deed;"<sup>2</sup> the enthusiasm of humanity and its soul's salvation;<sup>3</sup> the courtesy which made him equally at home among slaves and among kings; the clearness of insight which always kept one end in view, and sacrificed all minor points to attain it;<sup>4</sup> the tact of management; the tolerance of men's pre-

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1. Cfr. 2 Cor. 10,10; Gal. 4,13; 1 Cor. 2,3; and particularly 2 Cor. 13, 3-9, where the keynote is *ἀγάπη*.

2. Rom. 15,18.

3. 1 Cor. 6,9-11.

4. 1 Cor. 9,19.

Judices; the contented acceptance of less than was his due, were those sterling characteristics of the greatest of the apostles which carried him through his second journey, and also made the third missionary journey a glorious success. For it was on this journey that Paul wrote some of his most beautiful Epistles. From these Letters we see examples of his personality flowing in abundant measure. The two Epistles to the Corinthians are particularly noteworthy for their information concerning Paul's personal life. "The two canonical Epistles to the Corinthians are among the most important of the existing writings of the apostle, especially in what they show of his character and of his dealing with the most trying and critical emergencies arising from the contact of Christianity with heathenism."<sup>5</sup> His personal traits are also found abundantly in the other Epistles. A number of the significant traits, which appear not only in the Epistles, but particularly during this third great journey, are briefly summarized by Farrar:

There was the tenderness for his converts which makes his words ever sound as though he were ready to break into sobs as he thinks on the one hand of their affection, on the other hand of their ingratitude (1 Thess. 2,7.11; Gal. 4,19; 1 Cor. 4,15; Philemon 10); there was the conviction which makes him anticipate the very fiat of the throne of judgment (Rom. 2,16), and vehemently to exclaim that if an angel were to preach a different gospel it would be false (Gal. 1,8); there was the missionary restlessness so often found in the great pioneers of salvation, which drives him from city to city and

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5. Cone, op. cit., p. 126.

continent to continent in the cause of God; there was the ardent and imaginative impulse which made it the very poetry of his life to found churches among the Gentiles as the first messenger of the Gospel of peace (Rom. 10,18; 15,18; Gal. 1,16; 1 Cor. 1,1; 3,10; 9,16; 2 Cor. 11,2); and last, but perhaps most important of all, there was the perfect faith, the absolute self-sacrifice, self-obliteration, self-annihilation, which rendered him willing, nay glad, to pour out his life as a libation - to be led in triumph from city to city as a slave and a captive at the chariot-wheels of Christ. 6

Such was the remarkable spirit which guided Paul to Ephesus, his first major and most eventful stopping point of the journey.

Ephesus differed from other cities which Paul had visited mainly in this respect, that it was a city of astrology, sorcery, superstitions, idolatry, and every form of magical imposture. Paul, as was his custom, preached first in the synagogue. And there is no doubt that he reasoned here with the Jews with the same zeal and energy with which he confronted the Jews at Antioch and Iconium. For three months Paul continued to speak boldly in the synagogue concerning the kingdom of God. But there were a number of the Jews who refused to be convinced and began to stir up trouble against Paul. Again danger began to threaten him here at Ephesus as it harassed him elsewhere in other cities. Yet, in spite of the lowering clouds of persecution which were threatening him, Paul would not give up so easily. He found that he could teach and preach unmolested in the school of a certain man,

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6. Farrar, op. cit., p. 193.

Tyrannus. The Lord was with Paul, and his fame spread throughout the countryside. He gained the people's confidence and trust, because he loved them; and they saw the sincerity of his convictions and the deep concern he had for them. His labors and his preaching were not unblessed.

By the help of God he performed miracles among them. He met heathen magic with God-directed miracles. The incident of the seven sons of Sceva and their failure is similar to the failure of the Egyptian magicians in Pharaoh's court over against Moses and Aaron. Paul's success spread rapidly. The people were convinced that he spoke with authority, and they collected all their books on magic and burned them. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

There was one particular instance, however, in which Paul did not act with his usual wariness and caution. When the city was in an uproar and the furious mob seized his two companions, Paul would have ventured himself into the theatre to address the frantic multitude. But he was restrained by his friends from taking such a hazardous step. It was his impulsiveness and courage which prompted him to try to stop the mob rather than a case of foolhardiness and mere enthusiasm. He was brave, he was willing to lay down his life to save these friends, and his heart was burning with indignation at the senseless crowd.

Although the results of Paul's ministry at Ephesus were successful, the situation was much more serious than we con-

clude it to have been if we were merely to read Luke's account in the Acts. He has told us much of Paul's success and little of his difficulties. We must go to Paul's own letters to find references as to the sufferings he endured. The Epistles to the Corinthians are particularly full of information concerning Paul, his personality traits, and the way he dealt with people. We also learn from these Epistles of his probable imprisonment while at Ephesus.

"While at Ephesus he wrote to the Corinthians: "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." (1 Cor. 16, 9). In the same letter in 15, 32 are his words that he had "fought with beasts at Ephesus." Shortly after leaving Ephesus he wrote in Rom. 16, 4 that Aquila and Priscilla had risked their own lives for his sake. Three verses later he wrote of Andronicus and Junias, his 'fellow-prisoners.'<sup>7</sup>"

It was during this stay in prison at Ephesus that we believe Paul wrote the so-called Captivity Letters.<sup>8</sup> Paul's personality is expressed in the very manner in which he writes. Not only do these letters reveal his character, but all of his Epistles unfold to us his many personality traits.

In his letter to Philemon, Paul especially displays tact and diplomacy (vv. 7-10). He tells Philemon that Onesimus

7. Robinson, op. cit., p. 159. From Paul's own remarks, we learn that he not only had to fight for the truth, but suffered humiliation and imprisonment. Cfr. 1 Cor. 4,8-13; 1 Cor. 15,19; 2 Cor. 1,8; 4,8-10; 6,23; Rom. 8, 36.

8. Cfr. Dr. Wm. Arndt's notes on New Testament Introduction.

will return to him and that he should treat Onesimus as a brother. Paul loved this young slave very dearly and the entire Epistle breathes tenderness and affection. <sup>9</sup>

His nature was warmly affectionate. He was always hungering for love. He could never get enough of it. He always wanted more..... Paul could not have done his work without the love of his friends. They were indispensable supports of his soul. Without them he was undone. He could not bear to be alone. 10

While spending these long days alone in the Ephesian prison, Paul's sinking spirits were refreshed by the constant visits of this faithful and loving servant Onesimus. Paul felt very strongly attached to him, and was like a father to his own son. <sup>11</sup> Even though Paul suffered deprivations during his stay in prison, his letters, written at this time, are filled with concern for his converts, expressing joy at their remaining with the faith.

During his stay at Ephesus, Paul received word concerning the congregation at Corinth, and he immediately wrote them a letter. This Epistle reveals to us a state of affairs which must have rent his heart in twain. The Corinthian Christians were far from the right road. They were given over to wickedness, lewdness, and almost every gross sin mentionable. While Paul was with them, they were comparatively safe. The noble rigorousness of his personal influence acted on them like a spell; and with his presence to elevate, his words to inspire,

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9. Phi. 9,12,16,18,20. Note also v. 4, where this affectionate concern is manifested in his constant prayer-life.

10. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 327.

11. Phi. 10, expresses the love of close association.

his example to encourage them, they felt it more easy to fling away all that was lower and viler. But now he had been away so long and they fell into all manner of errors and foolishness. Certainly, as Paul heard this sad report, his heart must have sunk within him. He might have thrown up his arms in despair or have pronounced his life and preaching an utter failure, but his heart was filled with love for his converts. He might have written a letter, full of burning denunciation; he might have blighted these conceited, quarrelsome, and lewd disgracers of the name of Christian and denounced them and condemned them forcefully. But he did not adopt such a tone. His methods were of an altogether different nature. Roland Allen, in his work dealing with Paul's missionary methods, has this interesting summary of the characteristics of the Epistles:

The characteristics are these: (1) conciliatoriness and sympathy with the condition of his hearers, readiness to recognize all that is good in them and in their doctrine, sympathy with their difficulties, and care to make the way for them as plain and simple as possible. (2) Courage in the open acknowledgment of difficulties which cannot be avoided, and in the direct assertion of unpalatable truth. There is no attempt to keep the door open by partial statements, no concealment of the real issue and all that it involves, no timid fear of giving offence, no suggestion of possible compromise, no attempt to make things really difficult appear easy. (3) Respect. There is a careful presentation of suitable evidence, there is an appeal to the highest faculties in man. St. Paul speaks to men as naturally religious persons, and appeals to them as living souls conscious of spiritual powers and spiritual needs. (4) There is an unhesitating confidence in the truth of his message, and in its power to meet and satisfy the spiritual needs of men. 12

Such qualities as described above are very pronounced in this First Epistle to the Corinthians. In this letter its remarkable thirteenth chapter, we have all the personality traits of Paul beautifully revealed. His very greeting shows the fullness of his heart. Throughout the entire letter we see him speaking to them with all humility, <sup>13</sup> sincerity, <sup>14</sup> tenderness, <sup>15</sup> love and affection, <sup>16</sup> and a conscientious <sup>17</sup> zeal for souls. Yet he spares no words in openly denouncing the sins of the people. Having completed this letter, Paul left Ephesus to visit the churches in Macedonia and eventually to make a visit to Rome.

While in Macedonia, Paul received word from Corinth that his first letter was taken to heart. Now his zealous heart was filled with joy at this good report and he wrote the second letter to the congregation at Corinth. This letter is significant for its tenderness and sympathy. He tells them, "out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should have grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you" (2 Cor. 2,4). The Philipians were St. Paul's best-beloved converts; but next to them he seems to have felt more personal tenderness for the members of this inflated, wayward, erring

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13. 1 Cor. 1,1; 2,3; 9,19; 15,9.

14. 1 Cor. 2,2; 4,14.

15. 1 Cor. 1,4; 3,2.

16. 1 Cor. 13 (note the beauty of entire chapter); 15, 58.

17. 1 Cor. 9,16.20 - 22; 15,10.



Church than for any other community, just as a father sometimes loves best his least-deserving son.<sup>18</sup> That same heart was once filled with Phariseeical pride and hatred, uncharitableness and self-will over against those who differed from his convictions during the time that he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter" from Jerusalem to Damascus. But now his proud and passionate nature was transformed by the spirit of God. The fervid impetuosity of his character is now tempered by meekness and gentleness; his very denunciations and threats of punishment are full of love; he grieves over his insolent opponents; the thought of their pain fills him with sadness. He writes, "For if I make you sorry, who is he that maketh me glad?" ( 2 Cor. 2, 2)

Paul courageously went to Corinth to straighten out the errors that had crept into the Church. And from there he began his return trip to Jerusalem. It is on this journey that several particular characteristics in St. Paul's personality appear.

At Troas a certain young man, Eutychus, had fallen asleep during Paul's long sermon, and, having fallen from the third floor, "was taken up dead." Paul, overflowing with emotion, and ever actuated by the warmest feelings "went down, and fell on him, and embraced him (Acts 20, 10)." "The mental suffering of the Apostle drew compassion from the skies,"<sup>19</sup>

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18. Cfr. Pulpit Commentary, and its exposition of 2 Cor. 2,4.

19. Lewin, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 79.

and life was restored to Eutychus. Here, indeed, is a striking example of Paul's tenderness and sympathy for his converts.

Again at Miletus, Tyre, and Caesarea we see the religiousness of Paul manifested when, on his departure from his loved ones, he kneeled down to pray with them. Because he was religious, he loved to pray. Concerning Paul's prayerfulness, Jefferson states:

He is always speaking with God. His prayerfulness is one of the most conspicuous features of his character. No one can read the New Testament even casually without being impressed by the place which prayer held in his life..... In his prayers, Paul's personality stands out with vivid distinctness. All the traits of his character are illuminated, as it were, by a light from above. His kindness, tenderness, unselfishness, loftiness, nobility, zeal, magnanimity, devotion, are disclosed in all their rare loveliness, and we catch invaluable glimpses of Paul's innermost soul. 20

And although these dear friends of his, whom he did not expect to see again, wept and implored him not to go to Jerusalem, he, nevertheless, remained firm in his conviction that he must go. He was placed in a position of peculiar trial. "A voice of authentic prophecy had been so uttered, that, had he been timid and wavering, it might easily have been construed into a warning to deter him.... His affectionate heart was almost broken when he heard their earnest supplications, and saw the sorrow that was caused by the prospect of his danger." 21  
22  
Yet his deliberate purpose did not falter for a moment.

20. Jefferson, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 341.

21. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 234.

22. Acts 21,14. Note the force in original: μή πειθομένου δέ αὐτοῦ.

With a heart full of courage and unmoved by fear, he said to them, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>23</sup> He had undergone so many hardships, trials, and persecutions that he gloried in his infirmities. Besides all this, his love and zeal for the mission of Christ, far overshadowed any fear of death. For to Paul, to die was gain. Knowing the determined character of their beloved Apostle, they desisted from their entreaties.

Never had he gone to Jerusalem without a heart full of emotion - neither in those early years, when he came an enthusiastic boy from Tarsus to the school of Gamaliel - nor on his return from Damascus, after the greatest change that could have passed over an inquisitor's mind - nor when he went with Barnabas from Antioch to the council, which was to decide an anxious controversy. Now he had much new experience of the insidious progress of error, and of the sinfulness even of the converted. Yet his trust in God did not depend on the faithfulness of man; and he went to Jerusalem calmly and resolutely, though doubtful of his reception among the Christian brethren, and not knowing what would happen on the morrow. 24

Without fear, without excuse, but with boldness and confidence, and with unshakeable zeal and courage, the Apostle Paul entered the Holy City.

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23. Acts 21, 13.

24. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 236.

## VII. Paul's Last Days

When Paul arrived at Jerusalem, he was received gladly by the brethren. He had come to set himself right with the Church of Jerusalem, to overcome hostile prejudices which had already so much impeded his labors, and to endeavor, by the force of Christian love and forbearance, which was a pronounced characteristic of Paul, to win the hearts of those whom he regarded, in spite of their weaknesses and errors, as brethren in Christ Jesus. To these curious people and his fellow apostles he was to give an account of himself and his experiences in the missionary field. "We cannot doubt that St. Paul, with that graceful courtesy which distinguished both his writings and his speeches, softened all that was disagreeable, and avoided what was personally offensive to his audience, and dwelt, as far as he could, on topics in which all present would agree."<sup>1</sup> In what manner he greeted and spoke to them we cannot definitely say, but we do know that he was warmly received and that they undoubtedly joined

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1. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 239.

in giving thanks to God for the work He had wrought through their humble efforts.

The tension of the Jewish opponents could not hold out very long and they sought the first opportunity to seize Paul. On the day of Pentecost, Paul went to the Temple, where the plotting enemies fell on him with the intention of beating him to death. But Paul's life was spared by the commanding officer, Lysias, and his soldiers. Meanwhile the furious mob pressed around Paul and the Roman guards and cried out the same shouts, which nearly thirty years before, echoed throughout the court of Pontius Pilate - "Away with him, away with him."<sup>2</sup>

At this moment, Paul calmly and with the utmost presence of mind, turned to the officer in charge and respectfully spoke to him in the Greek tongue: *εἰ ἐθέλεις μοι εἰπεῖν τι πρὸς σέ;* ("May I speak with thee?" Acts 21, 37). Paul prudently spoke Greek to this Roman officer, because he knew that he would thereby gain his attention. The captain was startled to hear Paul speak Greek for he had mistaken him to be a certain renegade Egyptian. Paul, amid all this confusion and excitement, maintained his equilibrium and calmly demanded courteous treatment, for he was not only a Jew, but also a Roman citizen. Not only did he speak openly and boldly to his Roman captor, but he even requested permission to address the violent throng.

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2. Cfr. Luke 23, 18 and John 19, 15.

The request was a bold one: and we are almost surprised that Lysias should have granted it; but there seems to have been something in St. Paul's personality and deportment, which from the first gained an influence over the mind of the Roman officer; and his consent was not refused. And now the whole scene was changed in a moment. St. Paul stood upon the stairs and turned to the people, and made a motion with the hand, as about to address them. And they too felt the influence of his presence. Tranquility came on the sea of heads below: and there was a great silence. 3

Here again the great Apostle employed tact and presence of mind. He addressed them in the Hebrew tongue, and the sound of the "sacred language" in that sacred place fell like a calm on boisterous waves. He held the mob spell-bound and became master of the situation. With admirable judgment he deferred till the very last all mention of the Gentiles. To show Paul's astounding integrity in the wording of his address, Conybeare and Howson make the following remark:

As an illustration of St. Paul's wisdom, it is instructive to observe that in Acts 26,17, it is distinctly said that Jesus himself announced from heaven Paul's mission to the Gentiles; and that in 9,15, the same announcement is made to Ananias; - whereas in the address to the Jews this is kept out of view for the moment, and reserved till after the vision in the Temple is mentioned. And again we should observe that while in 9,10, Ananias is spoken of as a Christian (see 13), here he is described as a strict and pious Jew. He was, in fact, both the one and the other. But for the purposes of persuasion, Paul lays stress here on the latter point. 4

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3. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 255.

4. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., n. 10, p. 257.

At the mention of the name "Gentiles," they rose up in fury, and "cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air."<sup>5</sup> Paul was then taken into custody by the soldiers, and it was commanded that he should be examined by scourging. Paul wisely permitted them to handle him roughly and tie him to the rack for cruel treatment. He knew that it was against the law to scourge a Roman citizen without fair trial. But he prudently waited until they had gone far enough in order that they would be indebted to him for the wrong which they inflicted upon a citizen of Rome. As soon as he was roughly strapped to the instrument of torture, Paul calmly turned to the centurion, and asked: "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" The centurion immediately told this to the chief captain. When the captain asked Paul, "Art thou a Roman?" Paul proudly and courteously told him that he was Roman born. Lysias had to pay a huge sum for his citizenship, but Paul was free born. Now Paul practically had his captor just where he wanted him. This certainly shows his coolness in times of excitement and wisdom in dealing with people. Not only this, but he was quick in the apprehension of facts and not a whit less ready in the instant application of them.

The next day, one of the most dramatic episodes in Paul's whole career took place when he was brought before the Council of Jerusalem. When he made the assertion that he had lived

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5. Acts 22, 23.

perfectly with a good conscience before God down to the present day, the High Priest, infuriated by this remark, ordered Paul to be slapped. The order was cruel, and it set Paul ablaze. With burning indignation, in the twinkling of an eye, he thundered out the fiery words: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall!" These words of condemnation sent a thrill of horror through every one present. No one had dared to address the High Priest in such a disrespectful manner. Paul immediately felt that he had done wrong, and apologized, quoting the Scriptures to his own condemnation. He knew that he had acted not in the manner his Savior would have acted, and in all humility asked forgiveness for the offense he had given. Concerning this particular episode, Jefferson makes the following interesting observation:

Jesus also once stood before a High Priest, and while standing there, was slapped on the mouth by an officer of the court. But Jesus did not strike back. All he said was, "If I have spoken evil bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." That is the ideal. Jesus was a lamb, Paul was a lion. When Paul was angry he roared. But he did not roar long. Immediately in the voice of a dove he confessed himself in the wrong and thus showed himself a Christian gentleman. 6

What Paul had spoken here on this occasion he had spoken, and those words remained. To the end of time men will read them, and in reading them, they will feel the heat of a man who, although an Apostle of Jesus Christ, was capable of

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6. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 40.



fiery indignation.

Another interesting trait of Paul's personality reveals itself at this same meeting with the Council. He had taken possession of himself, and put into subjection his impulsive flaming nature, and calmly turned the situation over into an altogether different nature. He saw that the Council was composed of Sadducees and Pharisees, and, being aware that, however united they might be in the outward work of persecution, they were divided by an impassible line in the deeper matters of religion, therefore he cried out: "Brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." This short, but psychological remark, turned the attention of his accusers away from himself and against one another. One group now sided with Paul, and the other thirsted for his destruction. Here again Paul's integrity and self-control is very sharply demonstrated.

That night as Paul sat alone in his cell awaiting another day of suffering, can we wonder that his heart sank, and that he looked with dread on the vague future that was before him? He was a man of valor and courageous; he had encountered and survived many difficult situations before, but now he was growing old, and he knew the determination of his enemies to take his life. That fearless heart began to weaken; his dreams and plans of seeing Rome had been dashed to pieces; he was completely in the power of his enemies. While he sat there in the

depths of despair, a voice spoke to him: "Be of good cheer Paul: for as you have testified of me in Jerusalem, so must you bear witness of me at Rome." Great and courageous as St. Paul was, he was no different from other men in this that he had great moments of weakness; and it was only because he was given direct courage from the Lord, that he was freshened and became confident. The great Apostle was a religious man. His close communion with God through the means of prayer was a prominent characteristic which overshadowed all others. He believed in the power of prayer and the sole dependence upon God for help and sustenance. That he was a man of prayer we see from his letters. When he exhorted others to pray without ceasing,<sup>7</sup> he was urging them to follow his own example. He tells Timothy that he remembers him in his prayers night and day.<sup>8</sup> He assures the Colossians: "We do not cease to pray for you."<sup>9</sup> To the Philippians he wrote: "I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you."<sup>10</sup> He tells the congregation at Corinth: "I thank my God always on your behalf,"<sup>11</sup> and advises them to give themselves to prayer.<sup>12</sup> When he does not pray for himself, he prays for others. We can certainly agree with Jeffer-

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7. 1 Thess. 5, 17.

8. 2 Tim. 1, 3.

9. Col. 1, 9. Cfr. Col. 1, 3.

10. Phil. 1, 2 ff., and also 4, 6.

11. 1 Cor. 1, 4.

12. 1 Cor. 7, 5.

son when he states: "He is always speaking with God. His prayerfulness is one of the most conspicuous features of his character. No one can read the New Testament even casually without being impressed by the place which prayer held in his life." <sup>13</sup> It was during these long black hours of the night, that St. Paul received courage and hope through his close communion with God.

From Jerusalem Paul was sent before the governor Felix, upon whom he exerted no little influence. Felix was impressed by the manners and courtesy of his prisoner. Above all, it was the truth of Paul's preaching which pricked his conscience, and he came often to hear more of the Gospel. <sup>14</sup> The Apostle showed every respect to those in authority and spoke to them very courteously. When Festus had come to Caesarea, he tried to persuade Paul to return to Jerusalem and be tried there. But Paul perceived that it was only a scheme by which the Jews would be able to take his life, so he wisely avoided the plot and stood firmly on his right as a Roman citizen to be tried before Caesar. This is indeed an example of Paul's integrity and instant apprehension of facts. He had now appealed to Caesar. Now, at last, he could go to Rome. Whether he went as a free man or a prisoner made no difference to him.

One day as Festus heard Paul expound Scripture, he rudely interrupted the Apostle, saying, "Paul, thou art beside thyself;

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13. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 341.

14. Acts 24, 26.

much learning doth make thee mad." Paul did not fire back a return volley of indignant remarks at this humiliating and false accusation, but fully self-possessed and with respect for Festus' position, he courteously replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." When king Agrippa became sarcastic and said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," Paul, not at all ruffled by these doubting words, calmly replied, "Long or short, I would to God that you and all my hearers today might become what I am," and then glancing at his chained wrists, he added, "except these bonds." That was courtesy which even Agrippa must have recognized as perfect. <sup>15</sup> They could find no fault with this clean-cut gentleman, who by his remarkable personality and character exerted such an influence upon them. He was now sent to Rome.

When they had sailed as far as Fair Havens, it became a very serious matter of consultation whether they should remain there for the winter, or seek some better harbor. St. Paul very strongly advised them to remain where they were. In this warning we can trace the natural prudence and good judgment of St. Paul. He had much experience with sailing and of "perils in the sea." <sup>16</sup> The Apostle wisely and tactfully addressed such arguments to his fellow-voyagers as would most likely influence all of them. That St. Paul was allowed to give advice

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15. Cfr. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 191.

16. 2 Cor. 11, 26.

at all, implies that he was already given consideration very unusual for a prisoner in the custody of soldiers; and the time came when his words held a commanding sway over the whole crew.<sup>17</sup> But the decision of the majority was to leave Fair Havens for a better harbor.

They had hardly weighed anchor when they were violently tossed about on a stormy sea. This incident of the stormy trip to Rome is one in which we see St. Paul's personality manifesting itself in various ways. The account of this trip as given by Luke is one of the most fascinating accounts of Paul's experiences. It draws one very closely to that courageous and unperturbed character, who, in spite of his subservient position as a prisoner, became master of the crew.

The storm raged on in the full force of its fury for many days, and the passengers and crew became weary and began to lose all hope of deliverance. While the heathen sailors were struggling to keep the ship together and while the passengers were wailing in despair, Paul, as he had previously done during troublesome times such as this, prayed. A vision was vouchsafed to him in the night granting to him his life and all who sailed with him. He did not falter and become panic stricken, but he was very calm and composed, because he relied solely upon God's almighty protecting power. He remembered the words of his divine Master: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

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17. Cfr. Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 321.

Paul was not a high strung and excitable invalid who could readily be thrown into hysterics. He met emergencies with an unruffled pulse. He passed through stirring crises without a flutter. He faced unexpected situations with a mind that never lost its poise. The earthquake in Philippi upset the jailer but not Paul. The mob in Jerusalem did not paralyze his mental powers. From his speech to his would-be murderers, we can see that every cell in the gray matter of his brain was functioning. On shipboard in the fearful storm, he was so undisturbed and masterful, that the two hundred and seventy-five human beings who were his fellow passengers huddled round him for heartening and counsel..... He was equal to every situation, because his nerves were steady and his mind never played him false. 18

His advice to the passengers to eat in order that they might be strengthened was advice well taken, and the example which he gave by breaking bread and giving thanks influenced them not a little. <sup>19</sup> Another incident at this time is noteworthy. Paul saw that the sailors were letting down the spare boat, not in order to unburden the weakened vessel, as they would have given the passengers to believe, but to use this for an excuse that they might escape. Paul was quick at grasping the situation and with his usual tact and diplomacy, did not address the sailors, but spoke to the soldiers, for they

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18. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 79.

19. Paul had encouraged the passengers by telling them of the vision and promise of the Lord - "not an hair shall fall from the head of any of you." So speaking, he set the example of the cheerful use of God's gifts and grateful acknowledgment of the Giver, by taking bread, "giving thanks to God before all," and beginning to eat. Thus encouraged by his calm and religious example, they felt their spirits revive, and also ate. Concerning this incident, cfr., Conybeare and Howson, op. cit., p. 339.

wielded authority and certainly could stop them from escaping. He told them that unless these sailors remained with the ship, they could not be saved. Thus the foresightedness and prudent counsel of the Apostle, seconded by the prompt action of the soldiers, had been the means of saving all on board. Each successive incident tended to raise him, more and more, into a position of overpowering influence. Not the captain or the ship's crew, but the passenger and prisoner, is looked to now as the source of wisdom and safety.

And now another characteristic incident took place. The ship had run aground near the shore of some strange island, and the stern broke in pieces. The soldiers, thinking that the prisoners would swim ashore and escape, suggested that all of them be put to death. Now again the influence of Paul over the centurion's mind was a means in saving both his life and that of his fellow-prisoners. From the very start of the voyage, we saw that the centurion was courteous and kind to his prisoner, which fact can only be explained by the respect and tenderness which Paul had for him. Therefore everyone was allowed to escape the sinking vessel and safely reach the shore.

During the three months stay on this island, Paul was not idle. His religious zeal and affectionate sympathy for these ignorant heathen, prompted him to work and preach among these natives. That he gained their respect and love is evident from the fact that these islanders assisted the travelers

with provisions and means with which to continue their journey to Rome. By this time we can quite correctly assume that the Apostle was held in high esteem by passengers and crew alike. The influence that his personality had upon them cannot be under-estimated, for who was there among the entire group that showed such courage and self-control, such love and tenderness, such tactfulness and prudence, such devotion and courtesy, such thankfulness and prayerfulness? Thus were the travelers enlightened and renewed by the cheerful presence of St. Paul until they reached their destination - Italy.

When Paul neared the imperial city of Rome, he found that he was entering it not as he had hoped. He thought of entering the stronghold of the nation as a successful general. He was engaged in the conquest of the world for Christ, and Rome was the goal upon which he had set his hopes years before. He wrote to the Christians at Rome: "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."<sup>20</sup> But now he approached the gates a gray-haired, broken man, a chained prisoner, and his heart sank within him. Again he longed for companionship, and, with the coming of a small band of Christian brethren to greet him, his sinking spirits were renewed and he took courage. "Self-reliant as he was, he was exceedingly sensitive to human

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20. Rom. 1, 15.16.



sympathy, and the sight of these brethren and their interest in him completely revived him. He thanked God and took courage; his old feelings came back in their wonted strength, and when, in the company of these friends, he reached that shoulder of the Alban Hills from which the first view of the city is obtained, his heart swelled with the anticipation of victory..... It was not with the step of a prisoner, but with that of a conqueror, that he passed at length beneath the city gate.<sup>21</sup>"

In Rome Paul was given more freedom than other prisoners for he had his own hired house, and could live in it with perfect freedom, with the single exception that a soldier was with him constantly.

This gives him a chance to tell the soldier about Jesus. As one soldier after another comes on duty, Paul has in the course of a few months a good-sized congregation which has listened to his message. The spirit of the New Religion has gradually permeated the very heart of the Roman army..... Moreover, his chain has proved to be a means of grace to the Christians in Rome. Their courage revived when they saw how Paul bore his affliction..... When they saw how Paul rose above his chain, they forgot their own disabilities and began to speak in the tone of conquerors. 22

St. Paul grasped every opportune moment to preach the Gospel boldly and zealously. His fame and influence spread rapidly.

We believe that after this imprisonment he was able to bring the Gospel to Spain and also that he was able to make

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21. Stalker, op. cit., p. 156.

22. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 105. His courage and love is shown here.

a return trip to Greece. But this freedom was short-lived, and it was not long before Paul was once more lying in prison at Rome; and it was not a mild imprisonment this time. The last letter that he wrote, the Second Epistle to Timothy, affords us a glimpse of the unspeakable pathos which the aged Apostle experienced. The letter to his beloved brother in the faith overflows with tenderness and encouragement. He longed for Timothy's presence and wished to see him once more before he was to die. Did Paul's courage and bravery fail him in these last moments? If we read this last Epistle we see him facing the end with an unconquerable and unflinching spirit. He begins the letter with these words: "I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."<sup>23</sup> And how does he end it? "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."<sup>24</sup> This is certainly not a strain of the vanquished, but it is the victorious cry of a conquering hero. His faith never wavered amid life's severest trials, nor did

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23. 2 Tim. 1, 12.

24. 2 Tim. 4, 6 - 8.

his hope grow dim amid the most bitter disappointments; and when he passed from the dungeon and the martyrdom to his crown of righteousness, "he left the life which he had sown to be quickened by the power of God in the soil of the world's history, where it shall continue to bear fruit until the end of time, amid the ever-deepening gratitude of generations yet unborn."<sup>25</sup>

The new Paul is dead, but his teachings and methods live, and will continue to live until the end of time. The New Testament is an imperishable monument of the greatness to which God called him. By his more abundant labors, he won a place above all other apostles and missionaries. "Instead upon carrying the message of the cross far and wide in the earth, yea, in heaven, and hell, he was the foremost of missionaries..... His passion for liberty and his fearless defense of his convictions against tyrannies which would have resulted in stifling Christianity in its cradle, denote a championship of principles to whose success and expansion is due all that is most precious and fruitful in human civilization."

Of writing books about Paul there is no end. More books have been written about him within the last fifty years than about all the other apostles combined. "He is personally

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25. Farrar, op. cit., p. 688.

### Conclusion

The man Paul is dead, but his teachings and methods live, and will continue to live until the end of time. The New Testament is an imperishable monument of the greatness to which God exalted him. By his more abundant labors, he won a place above all other apostles and missionaries. "Intent upon carrying the message of the cross far and wide in the earth, zealous, intense, and courageous, he was the foremost of missionaries..... His passion for liberty and his fearless defence of his convictions against tendencies which would have resulted in stifling Christianity in its cradle, denote a championship of principles to whose success and supremacy is due all that is most precious and fruitful in human civilization."<sup>1</sup>

Of making books about Paul there is no end. More books have been written about him within the last fifty years than about all the other apostles combined. "He is perennially interesting, because he is so alive. His hot soul communi-

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1. Cone, op. cit., p. 144.

cates its heat to us across the chilling waste of nearly two thousand years. His words, as Luther said, have hands and feet. He takes hold of us and will not let us go. He is a potent factor in social evolution. He is one of the determining influences in our Western Civilization. The prints of his fingers are on our institutions. His ethical ideals stand in the market place. His ideas are running in our blood."<sup>2</sup> His burning zeal, his life of devotion, of heroic sacrifice, of unflinching fidelity, will remain as an ideal and inspiration to the generations to come. Through the greatness of Paul's character and the success of his missionary activity, we see the guiding hand of God. Without his entire dependence upon the help of God, without the love for Jesus his Savior, Paul could have done nothing.

Like some far off errant star whose course can only be halted by a collapse of the universe, so also this figure must be a wanderer of eternity, perpetually stationed at a post assigned him by God Himself to lead home the weary wayward traveler. His light must shine; his fire cannot be quenched. Even humanly speaking, his traits are such which history must perpetuate. Theologians and secularists alike cannot escape St. Paul's captivating personality. Everyone surely must realize the importance of personality for a pastor and teacher, whose pattern Paul is.

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2. Jefferson, op. cit., p. 374.

Great men and leaders may come and go, but Paul remains  
as an example to the diversified world. He stands —

Like some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the plain and midway leaves the storm,  
Though rolling clouds around its breast are shed,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

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