

PAUL, A PATTERN OF SACRIFICE

By Rev. D. C. Stanton

Possibly no one ever sacrificed or suffered more than did the apostle Paul. It was no idle dream or guess, when the Lord said, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). He was to travel in foreign countries, "far hence to the Gentiles," and preach the Christ of the Bible before kings and the Gentiles as well as to the children of Israel.

His natural flesh may have shrank from such a task, but he was not "disobedient to the heavenly vision," neither did he confer with flesh and blood, but he boldly preached Christ, that He is the Son or God, in Damascus, Arabia, Jerusalem, Asia Minor, Syria, Macedonia, Greece, Italy, and probably France, England, Spain and other countries.

His success was marvelous. In many places multitudes turned to the Lord. This was especially true at Ephesus and other places. At Thessalonica people "turned from their dumb idols to serve the living and true God." If to win souls as immortal laurels for the crown of Christ was his highest ambition, surely he won his case. He was probably one of the most persecuted of all Christ's ambassadors. At one time he was stoned, probably to death. At least those about him supposed he was dead. I understand that at that time he went to Paradise, but was unable upon his return to tell the things which he saw because there were no words known to him that would convey to mortals the secrets of the eternal world (Acts 14:19).

God raised him from the dead, and his friends never told him that he had been dead. Fourteen years later in referring to his trip to the third heaven, he said, "Whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knoweth." He never knew while living on the earth whether he had been dead or alive, but he did know that he was caught up into Paradise. He knew that he saw things which it was not lawful for man to utter. Probably it was equivalent to saying, "No tongue can express what I feel."

He speaks of these things which he suffered as "light afflictions." It has been thought that when others were telling what they had received as salary during the year, he said, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one, thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice have I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep." He referred to experiences when he had been without food and raiment, as having wandered about in sheepskins and having had no certain dwelling place, persecuted, afflicted, tormented.

Some have asked, "If these were 'light afflictions,' what could the heavy afflictions be? What could be worse than the public beatings, the hunger and thirst which he endured, the shipwreck, the being killed or the being a night and a day in the deep?" In considering what his answer might be, I notice the old adage, "There are some things worse than death."

I incline to the belief that his greatest sorrow, his greatest affliction, was when many of his churches, for which he had travailed in soul, departed from the faith and made shipwreck and went again to the beggarly elements of the world. Does he not refer to his greatest affliction when he said, "Besides those things which are without, that which cometh on me daily, the care of all the churches." He also speaks of the sad fact

that Demas had forsaken him. Demas thought best to turn aside because he "loved this present world." Of the churches he founded in Asia Minor, five of the seven would eventually be torn in shreds, and only two were to remain until Christ's second coming. See Rev. 2:3. However, we are to remember that these five which should not continue permanently were to remain possibly a thousand years or more and much good would be spread abroad in the earth by those in said churches who composed the "few names who had not defiled their garments."

That many of the sons and daughters of our most radical early members have forsaken the old landmarks and are now sailing in leaky old hulks, which appear to be headed directly towards the maelstrom of eternal night, and possibly they may never reach the city of gold and God, constitute reasons why we say there are some things worse than death.

The son, so much depended on to carry the family name down in history, has been fifteen years a wanderer from God. Then the many ministers who were themselves so pious fifty years ago have toned down and are not shouting the victory as formerly. There is the burden of soul suffered by God's true saints, which is harder than preaching.

One has suggested that it was the burden borne by the Son of God that made Him appear to be fifty years of age when He was actually but in His thirties. They said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast Thou seen Abraham?" This was their nearest guess. Were it not for the great love one has for the church of God, one might shake off these burdens, turn over in bed and go to sleep, but with love which can not be measured, his anguish can not be forgotten without a soul cry that pierces his heart. "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own heart." Those who walk with God will suffer under the burden of soul.

We need not, however, give up in despair. Not all of our sons and daughters are going to the dogs. Many of them are making good. Much has been written and published along the pessimistic side, but there are bright spots in the horizon. At least a portion of the sky is blue.

A sister came to Philadelphia when I was pastor there. She said her district elder had informed her that she would find a church of old people about to die. She added, "I suppose there are no young people in your church." I informed her that the church was indeed small at that time, but what few members we had then were all young people. After attending the services, she wrote back to her district elder that the church in Philadelphia was very much alive. It has become more so as the few years have passed.

At times young people of other churches come to us seeking the higher life, the deeper things of God. I remember a prominent minister of a large church came to me and asked if our church could not do something for his son. Many young people have tried a popular religion and failed and finally find deliverance when they seek out and take the way of the cross of Christ.

Once when Paul had iterated some of his afflictions and, I suppose, one who stood near said, "But Paul don't you think they will give you a better appointment next year?" his answer appeared to be that he had one witness of the Spirit that "bonds and imprisonment awaited him," that this would be his experience "in every city," that conditions would get worse as the years go by. "Why not locate or at least take a year off?" His answer as near as I can recollect was that he wished to press on and attain unto the resurrection of the righteous dead. He had

no thought of turning back. He asked prayers that more grace would be given him that he might not run in vain; that he might keep his body under subjection, so that after having preached to others he might not become a castaway.

Later, we find him near the crossing line of worlds, wickedly condemned, and an executioner was about to sever his head from his body. "Just a moment; I wish to write a few words to my son in the gospel, Timothy."

He wrote him that the time of his departure was at hand. Not that he expected to go to non-entity and pathetic dust but to depart and to be with Christ. He tells Timothy that he had fought a good fight, that he had fought according to the rules governing the game; he had kept the faith, and that he had continued in the arena until he had finished his course. There was a reward laid up for him at the end of the race. A crown of life, a crown of glory, a crown that fadeth not away, an eternal fixedness in a land where there is no more trouble, but eternal happiness.

Will not the readers of these lines here pledge with me that by the grace of God we will follow the steps which lead to the city of gold?

Walton, New York.

CORRESPONDENCE

A MEETING WITH THE
REFORMED BAPTISTS

It was our privilege to spend Sunday, March 24th and over the 31st, with the Rev. P. J. Trafton in the Reformed Baptist Church, Moncton, New Brunswick, with Miss Mullen as singer. It was a gracious time, a time of blessing.

The question often arose in our mind, "Who are the Reformed Baptists? For what do they stand?" To our great delight, we found a people standing for the precious experience of full salvation, emphasizing the great essentials, not non-essentials. A Reformed Baptist minister was introduced to a Baptist minister by a Methodist minister. Whereupon the Baptist minister exclaimed, "A Reformed Baptist! How can you reform a Baptist?" To which the Methodist minister replied, "A Reformed Baptist is a Baptist who has gone on unto perfection." Whatever may have been the thought in the Methodist minister's mind, his explanation was an utterance of truth. They are Baptists in name and old time Methodists in Theology, especially respecting the second work of grace.

It was not our privilege during our short campaign in Moncton to meet any of the other workers but Brother Trafton, the President and Miss Mullen, the singer. If these whom we did meet are samples of their ministry, then they are a fine type of workers indeed.

With some intensive and extensive holiness evangelism throughout their connection, they will experience an extension of the glorious Gospel of full salvation, a holiness revival. May God give them at least the Maritime. Amen!

P. WISEMAN.

Chegoggin

Dear Brother Trafton:

Please find enclosed my renewal for The King's Highway. I do enjoy reading it very much. I can hardly wait till it comes, it is a great help to me. I can say this morning that He is mine and I am His. Praise His name for salvation that saves to the uttermost.

Yours in Him,

MRS. MARY DOANE