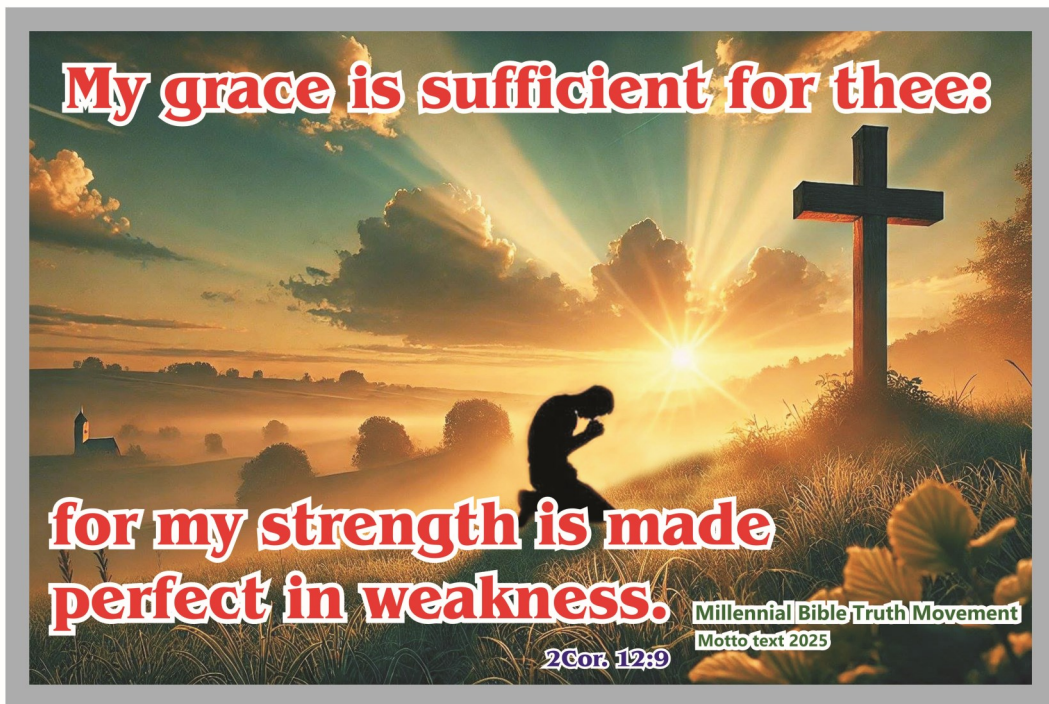


GRACE SUFFICIENT
PT# 547, Jan-Feb 1977, pp.2,3



"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness"
(2 Cor. 12: 9)

1. THIS is a wonderful passage, which we believe will be very helpful as our 2025 motto text. Our Lord Yeshua's words of encouragement here given apply not only to the Apostle Paul, but also, we may be sure, to all of us who likewise have accepted Christ as our Savior, have consecrated our lives to God and are energized by His holy Spirit. Doubtless the Apostle's experiences in connection with his "thorn in the flesh", likely his weak eyesight, were given to him and recorded in the Scriptures for the benefit of all others of God's people, who, from his day until now, have been suffering from time to time under peculiar trials, of which the necessity and value have not always been clearly discerned.

2. When Paul, blinded by the great light emanating from Yeshua's spirit body at the time of his conversion, finally received God's forgiveness and the restoration of his sight in considerable measure, he no doubt bore patiently with the continued weakness of his eyes, considering it a proper chastisement for his wrong course as an opponent of the Anointed One and an injurious person in respect to the Body of Christ, His Church. The measure of the affliction which remained

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no doubt helped the Apostle to appreciate very distinctly the closeness of the relationship between the Church and her Lord, as members of the one sacrifice, as explained in Yeshua's words, "Why persecutest thou me?"

3. However, as time went on, and the Apostle found his defect of vision somewhat of a burden in the Gospel ministry, he probably wondered why the Lord permitted the ailment to continue. Well did he know that it would be as easy for Divine power to give him perfect sight as not. Indeed, he had evidence along this line continually—the power of God in healing the sick—so that handkerchiefs, etc., were brought from contact with him to the sick, and they received Divine blessing and healing (Acts 19: 12). Paul probably reasoned that after he had suffered awhile in his affliction it would be removed. He may even have surmised that God wished to bring him to the point of humbly asking for its removal.

4. The Apostle explains to us that he did request healing—the removal of this grievous affliction or "thorn." He tells us that he did this three times (v. 8). There is a point in connection with the matter which apparently up to that time he had not discerned clearly, namely, that the healing of his eyes would be a part of the restitution blessings. But he, like the others of God's consecrated people, had laid his all, his justified humanity, on the altar, and had been called by God, not to restitution, but to sacrifice, to self-denial in the interests of the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. He himself explained the matter to others, saying, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12: 1)

5. But knowing that the blessings of God, including physical healing, were passing through him to others, the Apostle probably wondered whether some of such healing might not have been for himself. He had yet to learn that the gift of healing conferred upon him was as a witness to the people of the world rather than for the saints, who had consecrated their humanity unto death. He had yet to learn that if permitted by God to take back his consecration to sacrifice, even in a measure, it would mean his letting go proportionately of the spiritual blessings and favors which God bestows upon us when we for Christ's sake deny ourselves of earthly things that would probably conflict with our full devotion to Him and His cause (Matt. 16: 24).

6. God did not wish to encourage the Apostle Paul in a wrong course. He therefore did not grant his request for a physical healing. True, He has in answer to prayer given physical healings to many of His consecrated children, when they did not know better than to ask for them. Many are attracted by and seek especially the earthly things, the "loaves and fishes," and not the higher things (John 6: 2-69; Luke 11: 9-13).

7. God tells His consecrated people to "set

your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3: 2). This was the lesson He wished to impress on the Apostle. Like Yeshua he was in all things to be an example to the flock (1 Pet. 2: 11, 12; 5: 3; 1 Cor. 4: 16; 11: 1; Phil. 3: 17; 4: 9), and therefore it was appropriate not to grant his petition. However, what God did not do furnished a lesson to Paul, and also gives a valuable and blessed lesson to all of God's people, especially to those who are His servants in any special capacity.

8. While God saw best not to remove the physical affliction from Paul in answer to his prayer, because He saw a way in which this "thorn in the flesh" would be specially helpful to him in the development and infilling of the holy Spirit, He nevertheless answered the prayer in a more effective, still more blessed, though different way. He answered it through Yeshua, who promised that instead of removing the difficulty He would supply the more grace, the more strength, needed to meet the difficulty, to overcome in it, to compensate for it.

9. This was really much better spiritually for the Apostle than if his prayer had been answered by a physical healing. We do not know, and neither did he, how necessary to the preservation of his humility and usefulness in the service that "thorn in the flesh" was. We may know assuredly, however, that the giving to him of more grace was the greater blessing, because the grace of the Lord is helpful in all things, in all of life's interests, while the taking away of the "thorn" would have been merely a relief in one respect. No wonder the Apostle, when he understood the situation, cried out, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12: 9).

10. There have been blessed lessons for all of the Lord's dear people throughout the Gospel Age in these experiences of Paul. We all have various "thorns in the flesh," various afflictions, various difficulties, various trials some of them physical, some mental, some well understood by others, some known only to ourselves and the Lord. What a comfort it has been to many to have the Lord's assurance that what afflictions, trials and difficulties He does not remove from us, He permits for wise and loving purposes! These, He assures us, will all work together for our good (Rom. 8: 28). On behalf of the consecrated, He declares, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [supplements] weakness."

11. We recommend this as our motto text for 2025. We believe it is timely and much needed. The Lord has placed a great work before His people, to be done at the present time—the building up of the Epiphany Camp, which consists and will consist "of the loyal justified and the converted loyal Jews" (E 10, p. 672). Some of these loyal tentatively justified ones in the Epiphany Camp have consecrated and thus have become Consecrated Epiphany Campers (for

"consecration is always in order"—E 4, p. 420; P '70, p. 88, col. 2, par. 1), and we have a great responsibility toward them also.

12. Like the Apostle Paul, all of God's consecrated people should in humility recognize their own weaknesses and infirmities, and trust not in the arm of flesh, but in the Lord's strength, which is all-sufficient and never fails. Thus, and only thus, can we be overcomers and go on to assured victory. Thus, and only thus, can we say with Paul (v. 10), "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak [insufficient in my own strength], then am I strong [in the Lord's never-failing strength]," and "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4: 13).

13. Taking this, the Apostle's viewpoint, dear fellow servants of the cross, let us press on in well-doing (Gal. 6: 9, 10), in the study, practice and spread of the Truth, taking all of our experiences in good faith, realizing the truth of these words, that our afflictions, our weaknesses, our imperfections and our frailties, so far from working injury to us, will, under the Lord's supervising care, enable Him to supplement the more our willing endeavors with His strength.

14. As we go forth in the Lord's abounding grace and all-sufficient strength to bear witness to the Truth, to spread the Truth message, especially the message of Christ as Savior and King, for the blessing of others, let us keep in mind our Lord's precious promise, that He is our Helper and is ever with us; He will never, no, never forsake us (Heb. 13: 5, 6).

As a companion hymn appropriate to our year's text, we suggest No. 208, "Thy Grace Impart."

Thy Grace Impart

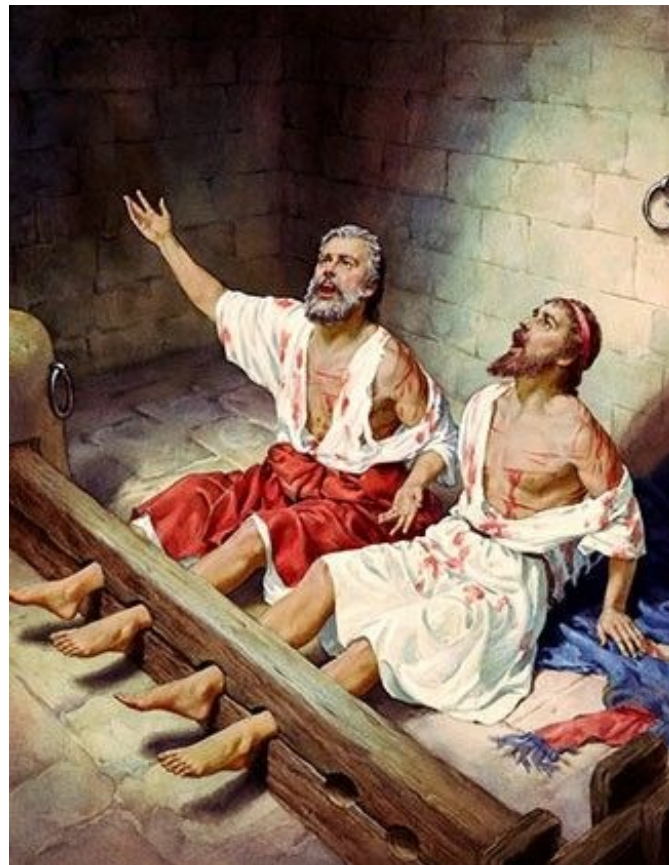
O Lord, thy promised grace impart,
And fill my consecrated heart.
Henceforth my chief concern shall be,
To live and speak and toil for thee.

While joyfully in thine employ,
The thought shall fill my soul with joy,
That my imperfect work shall be
Acceptable through Christ to thee.

Thy watchful eye pervadeth space,
Thy presence, Lord, fills ev'ry place;
And wheresoe'er my lot may be,
Still shall my spirit cleave to thee.

Renouncing ev'ry worldly thing,
And safe beneath thy shelt'ring wing,
My sweetest thought henceforth shall be,
That all I want I find in thee.

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GLORYING IN TRIBULATION— WHY? HOW?

PT# 547, Jan-Feb 1977, p.10

"We glory an tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit which is given unto us"
(Rom. 5: 3-5)

1. WE ARE TOLD in Acts 14: 22 that "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." And our Lord Yeshua tells us that "in the world ye shall have tribulation"; but in it all He sustains us with His precious peace (John 16: 33; 14: 27). "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Yeshua" (Phil. 4: 7).

2. Do you have any tribulation? Yes? Then make sure that it does not arise from natural causes due to the fallen flesh. Possibly you are being paid back in your own coin (Gal. 6:7, 8)—possibly you deserve the tribulation which you receive. If so, be sure to repent and reform.

3. "Let none of you suffer . . . as an evildoer. . . Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Pet. 4: 14-16; 3: 12-17). Our Lord gives us a great encouragement in Matt. 5: 11, 12: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall

say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven." So then, if we suffer for the cause of Christ and His Word, we should thank God and take courage, remembering our Lord's words: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 10: 32, 33).

4. All of us who are consecrated to God are to gladly accept sufferings in the present time for the sake of truth and righteousness as a part of our wages; for all of us who are consecrated and following in the steps of Yeshua (1 Pet. 2: 21) should look for these wages as a proof of our faithfulness. Do you experience but little or none of the sufferings for Christ's sake now? Do you begin to count the time of suffering over, and are you building your hopes on the fact that in times past you suffered for His sake? That would be a serious mistake; it is one of the devices of the Adversary to put to sleep the servants of God, saying peace, peace, while we are yet in the enemy's country.

5. The peace of God, which rules in our hearts (Col. 3: 15), is a living peace, which gives us tranquillity of heart and mind, even in tribulation. It is not a comatose peace. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thes. 5: 6). Some "endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended" (Mark 4: 17; Gal. 5: 7, 8). "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Yeshua Christ" (2 Tim. 2: 3). "Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. 24: 12, 13).

6. So, dear brethren, if you do not suffer for Christ's sake you have good cause for concern that you are not living up to your covenant of consecration—that you are not confessing Him and His Word before men by word and act as you should. If this is the case you are not overcoming the world, the flesh and the devil, but are being overcome and silenced by them. Of such Yeshua said: "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8: 38).

7. In Yeshua's day it was not the Gentiles in general but the religious leaders of the Jews and their sectarian followers who, supported by the Roman polity, persecuted Yeshua and His disciples. In the present generation the nominal church is adulterous in that it is mixed up with and united to the world, while claiming to be betrothed to Christ.

DARKNESS HATES THE LIGHT

8. Our Lord told us that "in the world ye shall

have tribulation" (John 16: 33); and we may expect it to come, as it has always come, mainly through the worldly church—the nominal systems, which are steeped in error and erroneous practices. Yeshua and the early church and also the reformers down to the present day found it thus, and it is so even today, despite the greater enlightenment. Darkness hates the light. "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not"; "and this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 1: 5; 3: 19, 20). It was so in Yeshua's day and it is still true today.

9. We do not mean to say that all but the saintly are vicious, unkind and intent on persecuting the true followers of Christ and opposing His teachings. We know that there are many well-intentioned people in the world. The thought is that there would be much disharmony between those who faithfully hold to the truth of God's Word and those of the world, especially those who in this day of enlightenment hold to the errors of the Dark Ages, and that there would be continual disapprobation manifested by the worldly toward the saintly. Some of the world hate truth, righteousness and holiness, while others are so out of sympathy with the light that they do not give God's faithful consecrated people the defense or assistance which they would otherwise be willing to give.

THE SOURCE OF OUR PEACE

10. We think it quite true that in our tribulation and in looking for the soon-coming Kingdom and serving its interests we must expect our peace, not from the world, but from God. We believe also that part of our tribulation in the world is because we are being more and more transformed (Rom. 12: 2); hence we do not find the satisfaction in the world that we otherwise would and that others find. Our chief business is to keep the body under and restrain its natural appetites, and then bring it into subjection to the new heart, mind and will, in order that it may be used as fully as possible in the blessed service of God, the only Master we should serve (1 Cor. 9: 27; Luke 16: 13; Rom. 6: 16; Eph. 5: 1, 2). The opposition within ourselves—the warring against the new heart, mind and will by our own sinful and selfish human nature (Rom. 7: 14-25)—is very trialsome. This opposition, together with our sufferings from unfavorable conditions and the misunderstandings, oppositions and persecutions by others—all these constitute our tribulations in the world.

11. We are not to think that only the Little Flock, the 144,000, Christ's Bride, who will sit with Him in His throne (Luke 12: 32; Rev. 14: 1; 19: 7; 21: 9), have had tribulation; there is also "a great multitude," the tribulation saints, who fell short of being of Christ's Bride, but are the Bridesmaids (Gen. 24: 61),

"the virgins her companions that follow her" (Psa. 45: 14, 15). "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God [not in it, where the Bride will be], and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them . . . and God shall wipe away all tears [of disappointment and sorrow] from their eyes" (Rev. 7: 9-17).

12. But how about the consecrated servants of God who will have their inheritance in the new earth for in the resurrection there are glories celestial and also terrestrial (1 Cor. 15: 40; 2 Pet. 3: 13)? The Old Testament clearly held forth an earthly inheritance for the righteous (Psa. 37: 9, 11, 22, 29, 34). It was necessary for the Ancient Worthies, from Abel to John the Baptist, to have tribulation in order to be proved faithful and to be rewarded as such (Heb. 11). They will be Christ's representatives in the earthly phase of His Kingdom (Luke 13: 28; Matt. 11: 11).

13. Tribulation is needed also for all of God's consecrated people today, for developing and proving them worthy of a glorious share in Christ's soon-coming Kingdom. "All that will live godly in Christ Yeshua shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3: 12). We are told that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present [evil] world" (Titus 2: 12; Gal. 1: 4). God's people grow strong as they faithfully endure tribulation. So much as to why "we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"—as to why this tribulation is necessary. Let us now consider how we should be exercised under it.

HOW TO TAKE OUR TRIBULATION

14. First of all, our text tells us that we are to "glory in tribulations." How can we glory in tribulations? In themselves tribulations, such as persecutions, misunderstandings, slanders, afflictions, deprivations, illnesses, sufferings, physical, mental and moral imperfections, etc., are not to be gloried in. But if we keep in mind their purpose—the growth in grace, the development of Christlikeness in us, and the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" they are working for us, "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (2 Cor. 4: 17, 18)—we can truly rejoice and glory in them.

TRIBULATION WORKS PATIENCE

15. Our text says that we glory in tribulation, knowing of certain wonderful results that it will work out for us if we are rightly exercised. First, we glory in tribulation because it works in us patience. The Greek word for glory here is translated "rejoice" in v. 2 and "joy" in v. 11, and means to rejoice greatly to exult, to glory. The Greek word for patience in v. 3 means

cheerful endurance, or perseverance; it is translated "steadfastness" in the ASV, and "endurance" by Rotherham and others. Our endurance should not be an unwilling endurance, but a cheerful, joyful endurance.

16. Patience is a universal grace; it perseveres unto a completion in developing and maintaining under all conditions the other graces. We are to "bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8: 15); and we must "run with patience [cheerful endurance, perseverance, steadfastness] the race that is set before us [the course marked out for us—Diaglott]," if we would come off victorious; and Yeshua has set us a wonderful example of cheerful endurance, which will help us greatly to go on to victory (Heb. 12: 1, 2; Psa. 40: 8; John 4: 34). "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God [reached the mark of perfect love], ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10: 36). And since patience is so necessary in developing, strengthening and crystallizing all the other graces and is itself produced by tribulation, we of course glory in tribulation. Thus we can say with the Apostle Paul, "I am exceeding joyful [overflowing with joy —Diaglott; the same Greek word translated glory in our text] in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7: 4).

PATIENCE WORKS APPROVAL

17. Since patience is needed to perfect the other fruits of the Spirit in our characters, in the development of Christlikeness, which brings God's approval, we see that it works this approval, as our text indicates. So we glory in tribulation also, because tribulation is the essential basis on which patience (cheerful endurance) brings to us God's approval.

18. The Greek word for approval in v. 4 is rendered experience (KJV), test (Rotherham), approvedness (ASV), proven character (New ASV) and approval (Diaglott). The last three renderings come nearest to the correct thought. Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon explains that this Greek word has the meanings of a proving, trial, approvedness, tried character, a proof, a specimen of tried worth.

19. We surely all want God's approval, His "well done" day by day and at the end of the way. This will come only as we prove faithful under testing by tribulations of various kinds. The good soldier of Christ cannot "endure hardness" (2 Tim. 2: 3) unless there is some 'hardness to endure. Our Heavenly Father in His infinite wisdom and love pours the cup that is best for each of us to drink. We must be tested and found faithful if we would have His approval.

20. If anyone consecrates, putting his hand to the plow, and afterward fully looks back, or draws back, he is not fit for the Kingdom (Luke 9: 62; 17: 31, 32; Heb. 10: 38). We must endure faithfully unto the end if we are to have God's approval. Temptations of discouragement and giving up in "the good fight of faith," come from the Adversary, "whom resist steadfast

in the faith" (1 Pet. 5: 9). We are cheerfully to endure afflictions for the development of Christlikeness, rejoicing in them as a means to an end, "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Yeshua Christ" (1 Pet. 1: 7). Thus patience works approval.

APPROVAL WORKS HOPE

21. If we follow a course that God manifestly cannot approve, either in doctrine or in conduct, what basis can we have of receiving His approval, His "well done, good and faithful servant"? Our hope of eternal life gradually fades away as we knowingly follow such a course; "for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting"—the latter course brings God's approval and reward. So, "let us run with patience [cheerful endurance, which works hope in and for us] the race that is set before us"; "and let us not be weary in [of] well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not [patiently endure unto the end]" (Gal. 6: 7-9; Heb. 12: 1; Mark 13: 13).

22. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises"; "not slothful in [the Lord's] business; fervent [Greek, hot, boiling] in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer" (Heb. 6: 11, 12; Rom. 12: 11, 12).

23. Surely God's approval, which cheerfully endured tribulation brings, gives us a blessed hope "both sure and stedfast" (Heb. 6: 19)—a glorious hope, which "maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Spirit [the holy disposition of God and of Christ] which is given unto us." Those who are inspired by the hope of life everlasting and a share in Christ's glorious Kingdom will experience no sense of shame under the discipline, trials and tribulations they must endure, but glory in them and rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer for Him.

24. The Apostle James (1: 2-4) exhorts us: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [various trials, testings, which are evidences of God's favor and opportunities for our development]; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting [lacking] nothing."

25. Every faithful child of God has experienced tribulation, amid which, through a faithful use of the Spirit and Word of God, he has been enabled to put aside faults and develop good traits of character. The Bible emphatically teaches this thought. Yeshua, the sinless One, was by suffering perfected in obedience

(Heb. 5: 8, 9), in mercy and faithfulness (2: 17, 18), and in every other point of character (2: 10; 4: 15). Our text says that tribulation works (develops in God's people) patience, the final overcoming quality (Heb. 10: 36). Our Lord commends especially those who keep the word of His patience—cheerful endurance (Rev. 3: 10).

26. Let us learn more and more to glory, rejoice greatly, in tribulations and learn their Divinely intended lessons; for God promises that tribulations, as a part of the "all things," will work together for good to those who love Him, which good He particularizes as Christlikeness (Rom. 8: 28, 29). We glory in tribulations because they work in us patience; and such perseverance in well-doing is rewarded by God's approval, which, when realized, fills the heart with hope for ultimate victory. Nor is this hope vain, because God delights in giving this victory to those whose hearts are filled with Divine love, a love that is the choice fruit of the holy Spirit given us by God through Christ Yeshua.

STRENGTH FROM ABOVE

BS# 490, Jan1977, pp.1-3

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
(2 Cor. 12:7-10)

1. THE DAWN OF ANOTHER YEAR is properly a time for solemn thought, both as to the past and as to the future. Looking over the past, we can all, if we are honest with ourselves before God, recognize that, although we have done some good and have made some progress, we are guilty of many sins, both of commission and of omission; we have done many things that we should not have done, and have left undone many things that we should have done (Rom. 7:15). If we have never come to God in His appointed way, or if we have come to Him but have more or less backslidden, now is a good time to turn over a new leaf.

2. We should come to God through Christ Yeshua, who died for us to set us free from Adamic condemnation; and "if we confess our sins, he [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9; Rom. 8:1).

Surely, in looking over the past, we can thank God for His bountiful mercies and providences on our behalf, and with the Psalmist can truly say, "If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (Psa. 40:5).

3. Looking to the future, we realize our fallen condition, our imperfections, frailties, impediments and insufficiencies to face the coming experiences in our own strength. We may feel like crying out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death (Rom. 7:24, margin)?" If we feel a need of physical healing or have infirmities that hinder us in our service for the Lord, we may receive benefit and rest more fully in His providence for us by considering what He did for the Apostle Paul. It will help us to come out of the valley of weakness and to find the key and open the door to higher levels in our development as Christians.

4. St. Paul's experience is briefly stated in our opening text. This was the language of an overcoming saint, meekly bowing to the Divine will. Noble, loyal, true and strong in character as the Apostle was, he nevertheless realized that he was a member of the fallen human race, and, in common with all humanity, was subject to frailties. God had called him to a most important and glorious work—that of bearing the Gospel to the Gentiles; and, for the benefit of the whole Church, to him were granted special and wonderful revelations, even above those granted to other honored and beloved Apostles.

5. He was caught away in mental vision to the third heaven—the new dispensation (2 Pet. 3:6, 7, 13; Isa. 65:17), the Millennial reign of Christ—and was shown things (doubtless the Plan and purpose of God, as now made manifest to us, largely through his writings, in the light of Gospel Harvest period, but) not lawful to be uttered then, because not then due to be expounded to the Church (2 Cor. 12:4). Upon him devolved the care of all the churches of the Gentiles, and great were the responsibilities of his office. Though his position was a most laborious and trying one, requiring of him great fortitude, zeal, energy and self-denial to fill it, it was also one of great honor.

6. And Paul appreciated the honor of such intimate fellowship of service with the Lord, and manifested his appreciation by untiring zeal and enthusiasm. But even in this the Lord recognized a personal danger to His beloved and faithful Apostle—a danger of pride and self-exaltation, which, if it should develop, would soon make him unfit for further service and rob him of his future reward. So the thorn in the flesh was permitted. It came, not from the hand of the Lord, though by His permission; but, as the Apostle affirms, it was "the messenger of Satan to buffet" him.

7. A thorn in the flesh is always a painful thing; and whatever this may have been (we believe it was his weak eyesight), it was something severely trying to Paul. At first he thought only of the pain and



annoyance it caused him, and of its hindrance to him in the Lord's work; it was a messenger of Satan that he was eager to get rid of. Three times he besought the Lord for its removal. But no, it had come to stay, and the Lord mercifully made him to realize that though it was very undesirable to the flesh, it was nevertheless profitable to him spiritually; for otherwise he might become exalted overmuch.

8. The implication of weakness the Apostle humbly accepted. He did not resent it and begin to boast of his strength and to reproach the Lord for not exerting His power for its removal; but, on the contrary, with grace and gladness he accepted the Lord's judgment of his heart, and His estimate of his strength, and appreciated the love that thus cared for him personally, while through him the Lord was ministering to the whole Church.

9. Yes, praise the Lord! He chooses His own instruments and whets, grinds and polishes them for more effectual service, and wields them with force and power in the service of His people; but in all the painful and laborious service He has special care also for His willing and faithful instruments. He will not suffer them to be tried beyond that which they are able to endure (1 Cor. 10:13); nor will He suffer them to be exalted without some counterbalancing thorn in the flesh to preserve their equilibrium.

10. The answer to the Apostle's prayer, although not an affirmative answer to his request, was a blessed consolation—"My grace [favor] is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [supplements] weakness."

OUR SIMILAR CONSOLATION

11. This is the blessed consolation also of every other truly submissive Christian heart. How many of the Lord's people are tempest-tossed and sorely tried in these days! Doubtless many of them have earnestly besought the Lord to remove this or that trial or affliction; but the piercing thorn still remains for their discipline and perfecting. Let all such, like the Apostle Paul, give ear to the Master's voice—"My grace [favor]

is sufficient for thee." What if other friends forsake you—if you have My favor, My love, is that not sufficient? And what though the flesh be weak and the heart sometimes faint—My strength shall supply your lack; and while you walk in the way of My appointment, your weakness shall only the more manifest the power of God.

12. What sincere child of God has not realized, in times of greatest need and extreme weakness, the power of God on his behalf, supplementing his weakness with strength from above? And when the task was accomplished to which the Lord had called him and for which he felt so incompetent of himself, who has not realized in the outcome the wonderful power of God?

13. In view of such a gracious provision to supplement his weakness with the Divine strength, the faithful Apostle meekly responded, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Having put forth all his own energies and having faithfully used his own ability to its fullest extent as a wise steward, it was his joy to recognize the hand of the Lord working with him—by miracles and signs and with demonstrations of the Spirit and of power (Heb. 2:4; Acts 19:11, 12; 1 Cor. 2:4). These demonstrations of Divine power, supplementing Paul's faithful use of his natural abilities, were the Lord's endorsement of all he did—the manifestations of Divine approval both to himself and to others, and consequently a cause for great rejoicing.

14. With the Apostle it is also the privilege of all God's children to have their weakness supplemented by Divine grace, while they meekly and faithfully use their talents in the Lord's service. And so all the faithful may rejoice in tribulations, infirmities and perplexing situations, realizing that God overrules in all things and supplies the needed strength, causing "all things" to "work together for good to them that love God" (Phil. 4:13, 19; Rom. 8:28). Only as we use the key of His promised all-sufficient grace will we be able to ascend from our valley of weakness to heights of greater strength and attainment above otherwise insurmountable obstacles.

15. But to rejoice in tribulations (Rom. 5:2-5), to endure meekly and patiently a sore thorn in the flesh, and even to glory in such personal infirmities as make the power of Christ the more manifest, is not possible except to those whose hearts are in fullest accord with the loving purposes of God. If the heart be influenced by pride, self-exaltation, ostentation, love of fame or wealth or any worldly ambition, joy in tribulation is impossible. But if the old ambitions and desires of the flesh are kept under, and faith, hope, love, meekness, obedience, zeal, etc., are all alive and active, we will have the consciousness of God's favor, extended through Christ, and then we can rejoice in every experience.

16. This is true of all who follow the example

of Yeshua and of the Apostle Paul (1 Pet. 2:21; 1 Cor. 11:1). The Master truly said of His followers, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). God's power operates through our Lord Yeshua and the Word of Truth, in all of His consecrated people, in proportion as they call on Him and rely in His strength; and this power can operate in the weakest as well as in the strongest of His people.

17. God's grace through Christ is sufficient for all and for every time of need. We are not to forget, however, that this great sufficiency is not poured out upon God's people unconditionally, but in answer to their recognition of their need and their prayerful request for grace sufficient in every time of need. He who marks the sparrow's fall and numbers the very hairs of our heads (Luke 12:6, 7) will not let our supplications for needed strength go unheeded (2 Cor. 9:8; Phil. 4:19).

18. "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." May these words bring rich blessings to God's dear people who trust in Him, whom He loves, cares for and will ever keep "as the apple of his eye" (Deut. 32:10; Psal. 17:8; Zech. 2:8). How wonderful it is to belong to God, to feel the warmth of His great love and ever to find in Him "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psal. 46:1)!

LOOKING TO GOD FOR STRENGTH

I look to Thee in ev'ry need,
And never look in vain;
I feel Thy strength and tender love,
And all is well again;
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.
Discouraged in the work of life,
Disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures and its fears,
I sink beside the road;
But when I humbly look to Thee,
Thy strength renewed springs up in me.
Thy calmness bends serene above,
My restlessness to still,
Around me flows Thy quickening love
To nerve my faltering will;
Thy presence fills my solitude,
Thy providence turns all to good.
Embosomed deep in Thy great strength,
Held in Thy love, I stand;
Thy hand in all things I behold,
And all things in Thy hand;
Thou ledest me by unsought ways,
And turn'st my mourning into praise.

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GOD SUPPLIES ALL OUR NEED

BS# 431, Feb 1972, p. 12

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Yeshua."
(Phil. 4:19)



1. WE should never doubt God's providential care for His own (1 Tim. 5:8). "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6). "Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he [the consecrated child of God] delighteth in his [God's] way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand" (Psa. 37:4, 5, 23, 24).

2. Some may ask, Should we then have the thought that our Heavenly Father plans and arranges every little incident of our experiences? There are extremes of thought on both sides of this question. Our brains differ. Our experiences are varied. Apparently, different ones of us are naturally inclined to view matters from different standpoints. We believe that naturally many of us are not likely enough to look for the Lord's providences in the details of life, and that many would have still greater blessings if they would watch more carefully along this line.

3. Some, however, carry the thought of the Lord's overruling providences to an extreme. They would be inclined to think that if they were unexpectedly to step into a puddle of water the Lord would surely have had to do with it. True, we are assured that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD"; but this does not mean that He orders every little thing we do, every little step we take, even when it proves to be a misstep, but rather that the general course of a righteous man is under His supervision. "The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear [reverence] him, and delivereth them"; "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways" (Psa. 34:7; 91:11, 12; Heb. 1:14).

4. We are assured that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). This means that God through Christ and our guardian angels (Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:15) may at times intervene even in the smallest matters. However, God expects us to be diligent in all matters, to walk circumspectly (look-aroundly) and to be faithful in our stewardship in His service, even in the little things (Luke 16:10; 1 Cor. 4:2).

5. We greatly admire that implicit reliance on God which realizes that we are nothing of ourselves, that our sufficiency is of Him; for "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good

work" (2 Cor. 3:5; 9:8). Accordingly, our Heavenly Father is glad for us to bring our problems to Him even in the smallest matters pertaining to His service, and He delights to answer our prayers and to supply all our needs "according to his riches in glory by Christ Yeshua."

6. God specially directs the course of His people, both collectively and individually. He has mapped out the general course of Fleshly Israel and Spiritual Israel, as is manifest from many Bible passages in addition to those already mentioned (Deut. 8:2; 23:4, 5; 1 Sam. 2:6-9; Ezra 6:22; Psa. 37:17, 28, 31-33; Prov. 2:7, 8; 3:6; 20:22; 24:16; Isa. 26:7; 30:21; 31:4, 5; 40:11; 52:12; 58:11; Jer. 2:6; 3:4; 24:5-7; 31:9, 10, 28; Amos 3:7; 9:14, 15; 2 Cor. 4:17, 18; Phil. 1:12; Heb. 12:9-11).

7. Bible examples also show this, as is evident from the cases of Abraham and Sarah in Egypt and Philistia (Gen. 12:11-20; 20), Lot at Sodom's destruction (Gen. 19:15, 16), Hagar when cast out (Gen. 21:14-21), Joseph in Egypt (Gen. 45:5; 50:20), Moses in his infancy (Ex. 2:1-10) and in many other instances, Israel (in its preservation amid the Egyptian plagues, in the wilderness, in its conquest of Canaan and in its deliverances through the Judges), Saul, David, Hezekiah, Jeremiah and Baruch (Jer. 36-38), Daniel, Jonah, Zechariah (Luke 1:20-22, 57-64), Yeshua in His infancy (Matt. 2) and in many other instances, Peter (Acts 12:3-17), Paul and Silas (Acts 16:19-31), etc.

8. In preparing His servants for future ministry, we can see God's directing providences, as in the cases of Samuel, Yeshua and Paul. It is manifest also, e.g., in His shielding the youthful Luther from a lightning stroke that killed his companion at his side, in His rescuing young John Wesley from his burning home through a human ladder, when no other way of escape was open, and in His delivering John Wessel from the fiercely persecuting Inquisition.

9. Samuel Crowthers is a remarkable example of the workings of God's providence with His future

servants. Born early in the 1800s in a native African tribe, he was in one of the frequent tribal wars, was captured by one of the marauders, was sold for a horse, then for a bale of tobacco and finally to a Portuguese slave dealer for a barrel of rum. He underwent all the horrors of a chained slave on a long jungle journey to the coast, and of life in a ship's hold packed unto suffocation with other slaves, until finally he was brought free to England after the ship carrying him was captured by a British ship. In England he became a Christian in the home of his adopted father, was educated in secular subjects, and then was trained for missionary work in Africa. He was sent there, and became instrumental in converting to Christ many thousands of natives.

10. Another example of God's providential care is the following: In the days of the Reformation, Brentius of Wurtemberg, being pursued by persecuting soldiers, escaped into a hayloft and concealed himself under the hay. The soldiers entered and ran their bayonets through the hay, without detecting him. Every day for fourteen days a hen laid an egg in the hay within Brentius' reach, thus sustaining him. Then the supply ceased, and he took this as an indication that it was now safe to come out of hiding. He found that the soldiers had just left town and he was able to get to a place of safety.

11. May all of God's people indeed rejoice in His Fatherly care, which supplies all our needs (not necessarily all that we may desire) according to His riches in glory by Christ Yeshua. Let us never doubt His promises, for "he is faithful that promised" (Heb. 10:23).

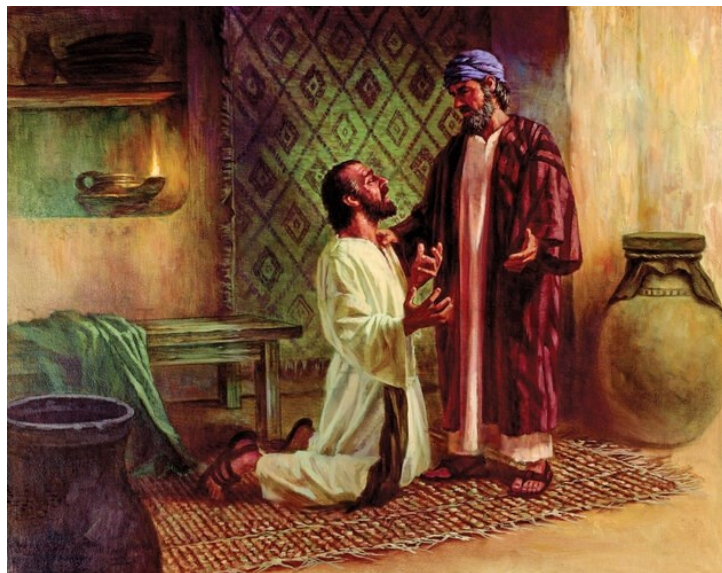
ST. PAUL A CHOSEN VESSEL GLORIFIED GOD

PT# 549, May-June 1977, pp. 34,35

"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"
(1 Cor. 10: 31)

1. WHAT A WONDERFUL EXAMPLE we have in the Apostle Paul! His great success as a chosen vessel unto the Lord was doubtless because he so fully gave himself up to God—to do, not his own will, but the Father's will—that Yeshua could use him as an Apostle, as a mouthpiece, as a servant, to such a great extent.

2. During His First Advent, Yeshua did not explain the details of the Divine plan of salvation, for even His devoted followers, including the Apostles, were natural men and so could not understand the deep things of God's Word (1 Cor. 2: 9-14). They did not receive the holy Spirit—in its begetting and anointing—until Pentecost. Accordingly, we read that Yeshua's teachings were chiefly in parables and dark sayings, though His disciples, being consecrated, could



understand that which He was pleased to reveal to them as meat in due season for them (Matt. 13: 10-17). On one occasion the Master declared to His disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth . . . and he will show you things to come" (John 16: 12, 13).

3. After they were begotten of the holy Spirit, there were fewer limitations on St. Paul and the other Apostles. Their epistles were addressed to the saints of God in various quarters, to whom they wrote freely on spiritual matters. Some of their writings were along elementary lines, which they declared were suitable for "babes" in Christ, and other writings were "strong meat"—the deeper things of God's plan (Heb. 5: 13, 14; 6: 1-3; 1 Pet. 2: 1-3; 2 Pet. 3: 18).

4. It is not strange that the Adversary was able to stir up the spirit of rivalry and sectarianism in the early Church. The Apostle Paul wrote against the wrong spirit, manifest in some who said, "I am of Paul" "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Peter," etc. He asked them, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?" He upbraided them for such immature, sectarian practices (1 Cor. 1: 10-13; 3: 1-7). And what would he say in this day of greater enlightenment to the Christians who have divided themselves into various sects and to enlightened leaders who teach contrary to the Truth that God has given us, especially through the two members of the Laodicean Star, to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20: 30; Rom. 16: 17)?

ST. PAUL'S QUALIFICATIONS

5. St. Paul was the most learned of the twelve Apostles, the one whom the Lord appointed to take the place of Judas Iscariot. True, as Saul of Tarsus, he had shown himself to be very prejudiced and bigoted in his warfare against Christ and His followers. But after the eyes of his understanding had been opened, and after he had become a Spirit-begotten new creature, St. Paul manifested a wonderful insight into the things Divine. Explaining his insight, he gave all the glory to God; he

stated that, though he was nothing of himself, he had been given visions and revelations in abundance (2 Cor. 12: 1, 7, 11, 12).

6. All this was in harmony with what Yeshua had said respecting him: "He is a chosen vessel unto me. . . . I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9: 15, 16). Naturally, our Lord could use a well-talented man, a well-educated man, who had fully given up his own will, to better advantage than He could use an illiterate man; and of some of the remainder of the Apostles it is written that even the multitude perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant (Acts 4: 13). Not so with St. Paul, however. He had education and a wonderful breadth of mind. All the Spirit-enlightened children of God, able to understand the deep things of the Bible, are surely amazed at the logic, wisdom and power of St. Paul's writings! Pushed to the front as the Lord's mouthpiece to the Gentiles, St. Paul grasped more quickly than did the other Apostles the things pertaining to the new dispensation; and he perceived that the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews in the Kingdom privileges (Eph. 3: 1-12; Col. 1: 25-29). Naturally, some thought that St. Paul was going too far; and the argument was raised that he was not one of the Twelve, that he was not to be ranked as an Apostle, etc.

7. However willing St. Paul might have been to be nothing and to let others take their own estimate of him, nevertheless he felt a duty toward the Truth and the brethren. This led him to tell us in no uncertain terms that he had full proof of his Apostleship, and that he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the Apostles in the understanding of the Divine program—that to him more than to all the others our Lord Yeshua had revealed more of those things to come of which He had spoken (John 16: 13; 2 Cor. 11: 5; 12: 7; Gal. 2: 2-10, etc.).

THE APOSTLE'S SUFFERINGS FOR CHRIST

8. St. Paul labored hard with the church at Corinth; and to have them fail to make proper progress in the Truth because they thought of him as an incompetent teacher seemed to him to be a pity. Hence in 2 Cor. 11: 21-33 he for their sake does some of what he calls foolish boasting. He did not approve of boasting; and yet for the sake of his hearers, he desired to inform them along certain lines. And how glad we are that the holy Spirit so directed the Apostle, that we also may know him better and may more fully appreciate his loving loyalty to the King of kings and the fact that he was the chosen vessel of the Lord for the communication of the Divine Truth even to the household of faith today!

9. But the Apostle did not boast about himself—his talents, his oratory, how the people were spellbound, how many people recognized his ability, etc. No; he boasted rather of the things which others would think to be for his shame. He told them what

God's providence had permitted him to suffer for the Truth's sake—scourging, whipping with rods, imprisonment, perils of the deep, perils from false brethren, perils from the heathen. To him these things were the marks of Divine love and favor, and bore witness also that he was a lover of the Lord and His righteousness, and that he had been willing to suffer for the Lord's sake, for the Truth's sake.

10. Thus seen, 2 Cor. 11: 21-33 (see also 1: 3-9) is a very valuable portion of God's Word. It gives us information which we find in no other quarter. It sets before us crisply a picture of a soldier of the cross and what he endured. It says to us, "Be thou faithful unto death"—follow in the footsteps of Yeshua and this noble follower of His—boast not in yourself, but in God and in your privileges of service in connection with His Truth.

THE SECRET OF THE APOSTLE'S SUCCESS

11. Here in the end of the Age we have come to the time when the noble St. Paul and the others comprising the Lamb's Wife have all been received by Him into eternal glory, and have been presented before the Father without spot or blemish (Eph. 5: 25-27; Rev. 19: 7, 8). And we may be sure that every one in that glorious company has been a faithful soldier, not a deserter, not ashamed of the Lord, not ashamed of His Truth. Of such the Master declares that He will not be ashamed, but will confess their names before the Father and His holy angels (Matt. 10: 32, 33; Mark 8: 38; Luke 12: 8, 9).

12. The secret of the Apostle's endurance of so great privations—scourging, imprisonment, buffetings of various kinds—is presented to us in the words of our year's text—2 Cor. 12: 9. The Lord's grace was sufficient. The Lord's power was made perfect in his weakness. And is this not the secret of every successful Christian life? Was it not similar with our Master—that the Father's Spirit in Him, His reliance upon the Father and His looking for the light of the Father's countenance, were indeed the power of God working in our Savior to will and to do the Father's good pleasure (John 1: 32, 33; 3: 34; 5: 19; Heb. 10: 5-7; 12: 2; Phil. 2: 13)?

13. The same is true with every follower of the Lord since His day. The Master truly said of His followers, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5). It is the Divine power which operates through our Lord Yeshua, through the Word of Truth, through the followers of Yeshua; and this power can operate in the weakest of Christ's followers as well as in the strongest. The Lord's grace is sufficient for all and for every time of need. We are not to forget, however, that this great sufficiency is not poured out upon the Lord's people unconditionally, but in answer to their recognition of their need and their prayerful request for grace Divine to help in every time of need.

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BS Jan 1977 p.7
MY DAMASCUS ROAD

Damascus Road may bring to light
The errors of my sinful way;
My Lord will show me what is right
And turn my darkness into day.

A fleshly thorn may bear me down,
For its removal I may long;
But Yeshua says, "No cross, no life";
He gives me grace, in Him I'm strong.

**In 2025,
let us observe
the Memorial of
our Lord Yeshua
on
Thursday the 10th April
after 6 pm
*"This do in remembrance
of me."***

MY THORN
BS Jan 1977 p.7

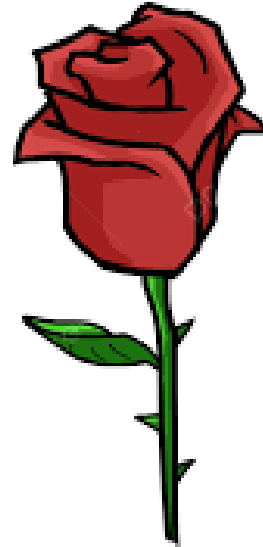
I stood, in earnest prayer to God
Before His royal throne
And begged Him for one priceless gift
For me to call my own.

I took the gift from out His hand,
But as I would depart
I cried, "But Lord, this is a thorn
And it has pierced my heart.

"This is a strange and hurtful gift
Which Thou has given me";
He said, "I love to give good gifts,
I gave the best for thee."

I took it home and though at first
The cruel thorn hurt sore,
As long years passed, I grew at last
To love its blessings more.

I learned He never gives a thorn
Without His added grace;
He takes the thorn to pin aside
The veil which hides His face.





NOTE

Some portions of the Newsletter articles
have been modified in harmony to the
present Calling and in harmony with the
Present Truth received till now.

THE NEW COVENANT

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