

ST. PAUL'S TEARS.

NO reader of the Acts of the Apostles can have failed to notice the strong affection with which Paul inspired those who came to know him. We find it illustrated, for example, by their grief when called upon to part with him. When he bade farewell to the elders of the Ephesian Church "they all wept sore." (Acts 20:37.) On his leaving the Christians at Caesarea some time afterwards it is evident from his words in Acts 21:13 that some of them shed tears. And Paul himself records the tears of Timothy. – 2 Tim. 1:4.

On these occasions it would seem that Paul himself retained his composure. No mention is made of his weeping like the friends whom he was leaving. And yet he has told us once and again of his being moved to express his feelings in this way. Thus he reminded the Ephesian elders, on the occasion already alluded to, that during his ministry among them he had served the Lord "with many tears." (Acts 20:19.) In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians he tells them that his first epistle to them, in which he had to rebuke them sharply for their carnality and toleration of gross evil in the Church, had been written "with many tears." (2 Cor. 2:4.) And amid the joy with which he wrote his Epistle to the Philippians the mention he made of those "whose end is destruction" caused him at once to give way to weeping. – Phil. 3:18,19.

Thus we see that the tears of Paul's friends, however excusable or even laudable they may have been, were the expression of feelings far less noble than those which made him weep. Theirs were the tears of natural affection, mourning its own loss. His was the grief of an unselfish heart yearning over the salvation of others, and dreading lest they should be lost, or lamenting because the Christian profession of the Lord's people was marred and their Christian life hindered by their unholy walk. In this matter Paul resembled the Lord, whose tears were shed chiefly in sympathy on behalf of others (John 11:35; Luke 19:41),

and who forbade others to weep for him. (Luke 23:28.) May he make us like himself in this also – strong to bear our own griefs and tender to feel the sorrows and sins of others. – *Selected.*
