



The 25th of January is the day the Church keeps the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. However often told or re-told, it is still an astonishing story. That Saul, the implacable enemy of Christianity, who came against the faith 'breathing threats and slaughter', should be chosen by God to be Christianity's greatest proponent and apostle is just the first of a series of dazzling and life-changing paradoxes that flow from Paul's writing. At the heart of these is the revelation of God's sheer grace; finding the lost, loving the violent into light, and working everything through the very weakness of those who love him. Here's a sonnet celebrating just a little of what I glimpse in the great Apostle.

### APOSTLE

An enemy whom God has made a friend,

A righteous man discounting righteousness,

Last to believe and first for God to send,

He found the fountain in the wilderness.

Thrown to the ground and raised at the same moment,

A prisoner who set his captors free,

A naked man with love his only garment,

A blinded man who helped the world to see,

A Jew who had been perfect in the law,

Blesses the flesh of every other race

And helps them see what the apostles saw;

The glory of the lord in Jesus' face.

Strong in his weakness, joyful in his pains,

And bound by love, he freed us from our chains.