General Conclusion

The primary motive of Jacob of Serugh in composing the two mimre on the Apostle Paul is to present a meditation on this biblical character who, for Jacob, is the model par excellence of conversion. Paul experienced a profound change in his life when he encountered the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus. He was converted. The very act of conversion cut the convert's life in two and in these mimre Jacob examines and explores both halves. The erstwhile persecutor of the followers of Christ became, after his conversion, a persecuted follower of Christ. He who experienced a radical reorientation in his life went on to preach the radical message of the cross, the only authentic instrument of change. Jacob goes to the heart of the Christian message in these mimre on Paul. Paul is a strong hero but also a weak human being, a great sinner who became a great saint. Jacob’s contemplation of the conversion of Paul is ultimately a confession of the mighty deeds of God.

Jacob creatively adds to the biblical account of his hero and imagines various scenes that are found in neither the Acts of the Apostles nor the Pauline letter. Jacob’s reading of scripture fires his imagination and he explores the deeper meaning of the text by expanding the narrative. The scenes he creates are non-biblical in a literal sense but very biblical in a spiritual one. Jacob, the flute of the Spirit, is attuned to the silent music of the biblical words and can sing out their glorious melodies.

Jacob of Serugh based his mimre on the Apostle Paul on the biblical accounts given in both the Acts of the Apostles and in the Apostle’s own letters. While there is nothing contrary to the biblical presentation in both mimre, there is an imaginative expansion of the narrative. This is not a betrayal of the text. Rather is it the work of Jacob’s poetic genius whose deep insight into the
biblical account allows him to creatively express its spiritual meaning. Jacob was possessed of a
gentle and kind spirit and he eschewed all doctrinal polemics. His gentleness and humility rendered
him acceptable to all and everyone. In these *mimre* he does not attempt to present controversial
theological ideas about the Apostle Paul, but presents him as a model of Christian life and as a
model of hope. Here is a sinner who by the grace of God was made a great saint and a ‘chosen
vessel’. In praising Paul he is praising the work of grace which is possible for all. The Lord who
is mighty did great things for Paul. As a bishop Jacob is preaching the same message to each of
his flock. The *mimre* are no mere encomium but a pastoral message on the boundless love of God.

Jacob of Serugh through these two *mimre* wants to present the person St Paul the Apostle.
He was a man who had a divine vocation as the Apostle of Christ. While Paul is introduced to his
readers they will get a picture of a virtuous man who had the quality of humility and disregarded
his educational status and joined the company of the uneducated Apostles and set his knowledge
and embraced the simplicity of the teaching of the cross. While presenting zeal of Paul he is
depicted as someone who ‘persecuted’ the church formerly and later became a ‘persecuted one’
for Christ.