

## **"One Thing I Do ..."**

*"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have laid hold; but one thing I do, forgetting the things are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14-15).*

The words of the apostle here should be burned indelibly into the heart of every Christian! Like other passages cherished and committed to memory, this one deserves to be a passage which we can instantly recall. It is a passage to strengthen us in the constant trials and tests which put our faith in the crucible to see whether it is genuine or a farce.

*"I count not myself yet to have laid hold."* What a difference in spirit the apostle manifested compared with others who have a confidence which borders on "over-confidence." Calvinists breed into their disciples a false security: "I know I am saved," says one. "If I was to die right now, I would go immediately to heaven," says another. And, even among those who do not, at least theoretically believe the doctrine of "once saved, always saved," there is a complacency which says, without verbal utterance, "I am OK. I've got it made." Not so with Paul. He never ceased to urge other Christians to *"fight the good fight of faith,"* to *"let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall"* (1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Cor. 10:12). Nor did he fail to make this application to himself. He wrote, *"... I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage, lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected"* (1 Cor. 9:27). Let each of us equally be so disposed.

*"One thing I do."* Here the apostle manifests a singleness of purpose. True discipleship admits of no other spirit. Jesus said, *"No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Lk. 9:62). *"Looking back"* was a persistent fault of Israel who, on one occasion, said, *"Let us make a captain and return to Egypt"* (Num. 14:4). Their failure to press on, through faith, caused them to fail to reach the promised land (Heb. 3:18). Jesus said, *"Remember Lot's wife"* (Lk. 17:32). And, so we should!

*"Forgetting the things which are behind."* With Paul, forgetting the things which were behind meant that he forgot what he might have been, what he might have had had he not obeyed the gospel of Christ. Some of those things the Israelites remembered, they should have forgotten, other things they forgot they should have remembered. They remembered the "melons and leeks": food they delighted in in Egypt, not accessible to them in the wilderness. Alas, they forget that the pleasantness of that food was eaten under a most cruel bondage (Num. 11:5)! So many long for the things of the

world, forgetting that with those sinful things comes a weight of sin and the closing of the gates to heaven (1 Jn. 2:15; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). We must forget the things behind!

*"Reaching forward to the things which are before."* Paul urged Colossians to *"seek the things which are above"* (3:1). Jesus said, *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"* (Mt. 6:19f). Those things which are before, in Paul's words is *"the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."* A prize is a goal. This goal is the aim of those who seek and follow the high calling of God. This *"high calling"* is heaven itself and in Paul's estimation, it was worth the singleness of purpose which was necessary in order that he might attain it. The worthies of the Old Testament counted that they were aliens and strangers upon the earth, for they sought for themselves a better possession and an abiding one (Heb. 11:13; 10:34). Have we a different spirit than they?

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