

"Be Thus Minded ..."

"Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded, and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: only, whereunto ye have attained, by that same rule let us walk" (Phil. 3:15).

"Let us therefore ... be thus minded" modifies the things which preceded Paul's words here. Paul had expressed his determination to *"count all things loss for Christ"* (vs. 7). He stated his ambition was to *"gain Christ, finding in him a righteousness not of his own, but a righteousness which came through faith in Christ."* Paul determined to *"press on toward the goal of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus"* (vs. 13f). These were the things he had in mind when he urged Philippians to be *"thus-minded"* with him. Such is an appeal to bring out the very best in those who pursue the same ambitions as the apostle's *"single-mindedness."*

Injected in this appeal is that it is directed to *"as many as are perfect."* This sounds contradictory to his earlier words: *"not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect"* (vs. 12). Still, contradictory as it may sound, it is not. In the first appearance of the word, Paul acknowledged he was in a state of action: he was pursuing a goal he had not yet reached, or not obtained. In the second instance of the word, he used the word to signify *"full grown," "mature;"* not meaning without fault or flaw.

"If ... otherwiseminded." To those whose minds and hearts were not fully set on things before, nor determined to press on toward the goal, Paul said *"this also shall God reveal unto you."* It is not a special revelation Paul here mentions, but revelation which comes through God's revelation to His creatures. The word is sharper than any two-edged sword; it pricks the hearts of those who hear it (Heb. 4:12; Acts 2:37). One needs no special revelation from God to tell us when our single-mindedness is single-mindedness no longer. Does not our own conscience smite us when we become *"bogged down"* with other interests, whether cares or pleasures? The Laodiceans were lukewarm; Ephesians had left their first love; both indications of those who were *"otherwise minded"* (Rev. 2:4; 3:15f).

"Only whereunto we have attained." The word *"attain"* suggests *"to reach;"* a plateau one has reached. The Philippians had reached a point of favor with God. To maintain that favor they were urged *"by that same rule let us also walk."* Paul used the word *"rule"* in another place to signify an accomplishment or attainment which was met. *"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy and upon the Israel of*

God" (Gal. 6:15). When the Galatians walked by the rule that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters, but that what mattered was that they were new creatures, they stretched forth and attained the role of new creatures by walking by that "*rule,*" they became the "*Israel of God.*"

The word "*rule*" in Philippians 3:16 is in italics, showing the word is supplied, yet that is the inherent thought. As they had walked by the rule of not looking back but stretching forward to the goal before, they had attained a state of maturity, completeness in Christ. In order to maintain that continued completeness, it was necessary they follow the spirit which brought them where they were. God's children must keep the heavenly prize before their eyes. Keeping that goal in mind reminds us that whatever occurs between now and our reaching the heavenly prize, really is not that important for the heavenly goal is the sum total of our purpose in living.

Jesus posed an important question to those of His day. "*For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?*" (Mt. 165:25f). Let us reflect on these sober words from our Lord. By what spirit or rule do we walk?

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