

CHRISTIAN MATURITY
PHIL. 3:15-17

Introduction:

- A. Paul has concluded a soaring enquiry into our relationship to Christ.
 - 1. Paul glories in, "winning Christ."
 - 2. Gaining Christ means that he can renounce his poverty and gain Christ's wealth.

- B. Paul is seeking to "know Christ," not "feel" Him.
 - 1. The word "know" is not emotion, or spirit.
 - 2. Knowledge of the object, so the knower is changed.
 - 3. Paul wants to know "Him." v10
 - a. Know the power in His resurrection.
 - b. Fellowship in His suffering.
 - c. To become one with Him in death.

- C. Paul denies that he has reached his desired state of "attaining" or perfection. v12
 - 1. "I have not attained."
 - 2. "I am not perfect."

- D. Paul had not quit. v14
 - 1. As time progressed, so would Paul.
 - 2. press = straining to finish, that is to win.
 - 3. high-calling = The winner of a crown was not crowned in the stadium, he was called up where the King was.
 - 4. It is the "high-calling of God, in Christ."
 - 5. The person who glories in what they once were, have missed Paul's teaching.
 - 6. We should be doing more, studying, praying, witnessing.

- E. Paul understands that this "perfection" is reflected in our actions.
 - 1. We are not "babes."
 - 2. We display a maturity.

I. MATURITY IN MIND. V15

- A. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:
 - 1. Paul has earlier denied perfection, now he claims it. v12 & v15.
 - 2. Paul means in v12, perfection as in "complete," in v15 he means, "full in age, as in maturity."
 - 3. "I hope all of you who are mature Christians will see eye-to-eye with me on these things."
 - 4. Paul wants them to accept the truths just revealed.

- B. "and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."
 - 1. He recognizes that there be some who do not agree, or yet comprehend.
 - 2. Does not say that this is good or inevitable.
 - 3. "This is the truth, if you keep thinking about it you will come up with the same answer."

- C. Mature Christians will be close in doctrine.
 - 1. Not exact clones of a preacher.
 - 2. We should give others time to learn and grow.
 - 3. There is "one faith," there is "the faith."
 - 4. We have to grow into, "the faith," we are born into the family of God.

II. MATURITY IN WALK. V16

- A. Nevertheless, where to we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.
 - 1. attained = to come or do first.
 - 2. walk = to go in order, to advance in rows, or by rank, walk according to rule.
 - 3. rule = a reed, a measuring rod or line.
 - 4. mind = regard or care for.
 - 5. "But whatever be the point that we have already reached, let us persevere in the same course."

- B. Paul wants them to keep walking the same path.
 - 1. You got where you are by a certain way, keep on walking in that way.
 - 2. You played by a certain rule, stick by it.
 - 3. Maturity is to find the right road and stay on it.
 - a. Don't look at the inviting side roads.
 - b. Sight-seeing and traveling don't mix.
 - c. Little detours may take you a long way away from your true goal!

III. MATURITY IN EXAMPLE. V17

- A. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example."
 - 1. followers = an imitator.
 - 2. mark = watch an object, an object set up in the distance at which one looks and aims.
 - 3. example = anything produced by repeated blows, a mark or impression, a model, a pattern.
- B. There are different guides or signposts on the way.
 - 1. There is Jesus, the perfect example.
 - 2. There is the Bible.
 - 3. There is our past experience, the things that are tried and true.
- C. Paul offers himself as a "type" or model.
 - 1. Paul is mature.
 - 2. Not the blind leading the blind.
 - 3. "Imitate me," "follow me as I follow Christ."
 - 4. If you can't see the object, follow someone who knows the way, keep your eye on the guide.
 - 5. As a minister or preacher he had the duty and the right to lead or set an example.

D. Paul offers others as a "mark," something to look at and keep you path.

1. He uses the plural, "us."
2. The preacher isn't the only example in the church.
3. All mature Christians are to be "marks" and examples.