

August 22

Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business? Luke 2:49

SHOULD we not all have the Master's Spirit, expressed by His words?...The Lord's

I MUST BE ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS

R5065 "When our Lord at twelve years of age asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49) He would have in mind the Heavenly Father, just as any consecrated child of God might think of Him. From the information which He had received from His mother, Mary, He would know of His miraculous birth and of His special mission in the world. His mother knew that He could not be true to Himself and His mission unless she told Him about these things. Having been told that He was specially holy and miraculously born for this very purpose, He now turned to Mary and asked, Is it possible that you should not know that I should be about My Father's business? Did not you tell me of this thing? He was surprised that Mary and Joseph should not understand that this was the very thing for Him to do."

R1916 "THE BOY JESUS...Luke 2:40-52 *Golden Text*--"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."--Luke 2:52.

THIS brief narrative gives us a single glimpse at the youth of our Lord; but it reveals all that is important for us to know concerning him before he arrived at maturity. It shows us the wonderful prodigy of wisdom and grace, so developed at twelve years of age as to be able to cope with the reasoning powers and the learning of men far advanced in years, in so much that he astonished them with his understanding and answers.

We observe also that his superior ability did not puff him up nor cause him to forget the respect and deference due to the advanced years and position of the Doctors and teachers. He was meek and lowly of heart, both as a boy and as a man. He was anxious also to learn of them from the law and the prophets. He did not miraculously know all that was in them; but he "*grew in wisdom.*" He acquired knowledge, but with that ease, rapidity and retentiveness with which only a perfect mind can grasp and hold it.

His tarrying in the temple to receive the instructions of his Father's Word evidently was not in wilful disregard for his parents; but rather, was an evidence of his zeal to do his Father's will, which motive, in his childish simplicity, he seemed to think his mother and Joseph would fully realize and approve. This is apparent from his question,-- "Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be in the courts of my Father?"...

But his mother and Joseph understood him not. How could they? Mary silently pondered these things in her heart; but how could she understand this mystery of God? Jesus, seeing that he was not understood and remembering his duty of submission to parents, was subject to their wishes, and returned with them to Nazareth. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." In the retirement of his early life of preparation for his public ministry and great sacrifice, his virtues

true saints have no business of their own, for they gave their all to the Lord at consecration. Their business they manage as trustees for the Lord--not to be turned over at their death, in prosperous condition, to their chil-

commanded the admiration of all who knew him. Praise God for this testimony of the human perfection of his dear Son!"

R4957 "ABOUT MY FATHER'S BUSINESS" — LUKE 2:40-52...

THE WONDERFUL BABE of Bethlehem "grew and waxed strong, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." The *perfect child, the perfect boy*, was of course far in advance of imperfect children. The schooling privileges of today were unknown. The education gleaned by the masses came to them chiefly through contact with their elders; history itself being handed down from generation to generation, except for the scholarly. Jewish boys, however, had an advantage over those of other nations because of the Divine regulation of the temple services and the services in the synagogues every Sabbath day. Those services consisted particularly of readings from the Law and the Prophets by course. Thus all Jewish children had excellent facilities for hearing the Word of the Lord. "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them." Few had more opportunities than this—few were able to read; but Jesus was amongst those few—not because of schooling privileges in His youth, but because of His brilliant mind, which retained everything that came to it and to which, therefore, the Bible was continually an open book.

The surpassing abilities of Jesus are attested by the fact that when He entered the synagogue of His home city, Nazareth, His superiority as a reader and an exponent was so generally recognized that the service was usually turned over to Him. (Luke 4:16.) And yet the people marveled, saying, How comes it that Jesus is a man of letters, having never gone to school? And they all bore Him witness and wondered at the grace of His speech. (Luke 4:22.) The explanation of the matter is that Jesus was perfect while all about Him were imperfect.

Our lesson relates particularly to an incident which occurred when Jesus was twelve years old. His "parents" were strict religionists and obeyed the Mosaic Law by attending regularly the Feast of Passover at Jerusalem every year...

The gathering of Jews from all parts of Palestine, yea, from the entire world, meant great crowds of people; on some occasions more than a million. Different families from different localities usually traveled together as one caravan. It was a Jewish custom that a Jewish boy should be considered "a son of the Law" when he had attained his twelfth year. He then became responsible under the Law and thenceforth was required to keep its festivals, etc.

JESUS A GREAT STUDENT

At the time in question Jesus had attained His twelfth birthday. He well knew of His peculiar birth and of the great prophecies which centered in Him, related by Gabriel to His mother, and was on the alert to fulfil His mission—to do the will of the Heavenly Father. He surmised that since at twelve years of age Jewish boys came under the requirements of the Law Covenant, this arrangement might possibly have been made

dren or their friends, possibly to their injury. It is to be used by the trustee as wisely as he knows how before death; for then his trusteeship ends, and he must render his account. Z. '03-'53 R3148:5

as an indication of His proper course and duty—that that was the time at which He should begin His ministry.

Therefore He resolved to consult the very highest authorities respecting the teachings of the Law upon this subject. From time to time He sought intercourse with the learned Scribes and Pharisees and Doctors. He wished to make no mistake; He was therefore not satisfied with simply their opinion, but desired references to the Law and to the Prophets that He Himself might judge and not rely too implicitly upon the conclusions of others. During a considerable part of the time of the Passover Feast the great men of His nation were engaged in public functions, and hence His best opportunity for conference with them was at the close of the feast, and then as He could gain their attention—coming time and again with new questions, with fresh inquiries about other types and symbols and their proper meaning.

When the time came for the return journey He had not finished His investigations of the Scripture teachings on this point. His parents, thinking that He was in the company with some of their relatives, went a day's journey homeward before they ascertained that He was not in the company. Then they returned, journeying another day, and the third day they found Him in the temple with the learned men discussing the question which to Him was the all-important one of the hour—the time at which public ministry might be begun, according to the Law. Evidently He had just finished His quest and found as His satisfactory answer that, although a boy at twelve became amenable to the Law, none could enter upon a teaching or preaching service until thirty years of age. This matter had evidently been settled just prior to the arrival of His parents.

Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, said nothing, allowing his wife, Mary, to chide Jesus with having been negligent of His duty toward them—causing them trouble, grief, annoyance by not coming promptly with them on the return journey. The words of Jesus may be paraphrased thus: Did you not know that I was twelve years of age; was it not your understanding that I had reached the time when I must become a son of the Law? Did you not know that this might mean to me some great responsibility in connection with my service of the Heavenly Father? Did you not forewarn me that such responsibilities were to be looked for by myself and that I must be diligent to accomplish my mission? Why, then, may I ask, should you be surprised and disappointed in finding that I had tarried behind you? Did it not occur to you that as a son of the Law I might have responsibilities at this time and that I must use every opportunity to be about my Father's business—to do whatever work I should find He has appointed for me? But now I will give you no further trouble. I have ascertained through study and conference with the Doctors of the Law that there is nothing that I can do as a minor in the way of beginning the Father's service. I am therefore ready to return with you to our home, and I assure you that I

shall be as loyal and obedient to you as heretofore and that my apparent neglect of your wishes in the present instance was merely because I supposed that you knew that I would be looking out for my Heavenly Father's business and my privileges in connection with it, and that you would therefore not be necessarily expecting me to return home at this time.

JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM

In the last verse of our study we read: "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." It was not a boy who was to be the Redeemer, even as it was not a boy who had sinned. Jesus, therefore, to be a corresponding price for Father Adam and the race which lost life in Him, needed first to be developed into manhood.

The verse under consideration covers the period from His twelfth year to His thirtieth. For eighteen years He kept growing in wisdom and in grace of character. He did not grow in the Father's favor in the sense of becoming less sinful and more righteous, but in the sense of becoming more developed—reaching human perfection. Just so a piece of fruit in growing may be as perfect of its kind at the beginning as at the end, but it grows in size and in richness of flavor, and therefore in the appreciation of the owner.

So it was with Jesus. The perfect babe became the perfect boy; the perfect boy became the perfect youth; the perfect youth became the perfect man, and at thirty years of age was ripe and ready to be offered as an acceptable sacrifice of sweet savor to God, on behalf of mankind—"the Just for the unjust."

R5065 "The impress of previous experiences did not come to Him during His boyhood; for He was then *growing* in knowledge and in stature, and in favor with God and man. We believe that the impress came at the time of His consecration at Jordan; and that not only had He there given to Him the impress of His previous experiences with the Father and of the remote past, but also that He had light given to Him upon the Scriptures so that He could grasp the full purport of what He had done when He gave Himself in consecration.

As the "heavens" continued to open to our Lord, He would see that the experiences of the Messiah, which could not have been commanded under the Law Covenant, were nevertheless to be His privileges as He would see these to be the Divine will, as He would see these to be the Divine Law in the Prophecies. As a sheep would be dumb before its shearers, so He would not rebel as His rights were taken from Him. He would know that He was to be put to death; and that He was to be an innocent victim. He was to be the crucified One, the antitype of the brazen serpent.

Having consecrated to fulfil all things written in the Book Jesus was fully prepared for His every experience. This we see also is the purport of that beautiful picture in Revelation of the scroll sealed with seven seals. The proclamation was made, "Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?" (Rev. 5:2.) Up to that time no one had been found who could open the Book. But at that time our Lord was found worthy to open the Book, and to Him was given all the knowledge in the Divine Plan, that He might carry out these things in the sacrificing of the flesh.

At His consecration at Jordan our Lord gave up the human life—He gave up all rights and privileges as a human being. The ultimate purpose of this full surrender of His life was that He might bring everlasting life to mankind. The Father's arrangement with Him, however, was such that He might retain His personality, His identity. But after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, He was a New Creature; and as a New Creature He had the human body in which to develop character, in which to have His experiences. This New Creature was developed to perfection during the three and one-half years of His ministry, and was ready for the spirit body which had been promised to Him...

HE "MANIFESTED FORTH HIS GLORY"

Let us examine some Scriptures which might be understood to imply that our Lord had a clear recollection of His pre-human experiences with the Father.

(1) "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." (John 5:19.) These words were used in connection with the healing of the sick. They do not, of course, mean that the Lord had seen the Father healing the sick, but that He had seen the Father's will, the Father's Plan.

Our Lord was simply carrying out the Father's will concerning Him: "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart"; etc. (Isa. 35:5,6.) These miracles of healing were some of the things that He was to do, as written in the Scriptures. He knew that He was to do these miracles and that they were a foreshadowing of the things to be done by and by. As we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus...and manifested forth His glory."—John 2:11.

(2) "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth." (Prov. 8:23-25.) This passage may be viewed either as a prophecy of what our Lord understood of His previous condition, or as a figure of speech setting forth the Wisdom of God all through the ages. But since the Wisdom of God is specially revealed in our Lord Jesus, so this was a foreshadowing of what Jesus might know respecting His pre-human condition.

(3) When our Lord at twelve years of age asked, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49) He would have in mind the Heavenly Father, just as any consecrated child of God might think of Him. From the information which He had received from His mother, Mary...

MEMORY THE MEANS OF IDENTIFICATION

(4) Our Lord's statement, "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58), serves to identify the man Jesus with His previous condition as the *Logos* before He was made flesh and dwelt among us. He is the same today, although He has been received to the spirit plane. He says, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive forevermore." (Rev. 1:18.) Originally He was on the spirit plane. Later as a man, He lived;

He died. At His resurrection He was made alive on the spirit plane, far above angels, principalities and powers. But the identity, the personality, is the same.

And we can readily believe that the memory of things past is still with our Lord. We also think that He remembers the experiences which He had in the flesh and also those which He had before He became flesh. Otherwise, He could not identify Himself. Memory seems to be the means of identification of our personality. Nothing in this Scripture would seem to imply that our Lord was born into the world with the knowledge of all His previous experiences. After His consecration He received the knowledge by some means which we are not great enough to understand—by some power the Father used; for the Father has all power.

(5) "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (Heb. 13:8.) This statement would not identify our Lord with His previous condition; for in His pre-existent state, He was not *Jesus*. He was called Jesus at His birth. He became Jesus Christ at His baptism. "By His knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities." (Isa. 53:11.) Our Lord began to bear the iniquities of the world at His consecration, and finished so doing at His crucifixion. Since then He has been reckoning certain persons to be members of Himself. When the Holy Spirit came upon Him and the heavens were opened unto Him, He probably received the knowledge which would enable Him to overcome.

Before His consecration, when our Lord was a perfect man just as Adam was, we know not what force Satan's temptations would have had; but when His mind was opened, then Satan came to tempt Him along the very line of His work, along the line of the consecration which He had already made. Satan attempted to overthrow His consecration and to thwart its completion. How much knowledge our Lord had we do not know; but the Heavenly Father gave Him sufficient to enable Him to come off conqueror. And so with us. Our Lord gives us knowledge of Himself and of the Father. He shows us the relation between the sufferings of this present time and the glories that are to follow. Thus by knowledge all the members of the Body of this Great Righteous Servant will be permitted to come off "more than conquerors" by His grace.

THE NATURAL MAN CANNOT PERCEIVE SPIRITUAL THINGS

(6) "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (John 3:11.) The intimation is that our Lord could tell heavenly things, but that He was not disposed to do so, because Nicodemus and others found it difficult to receive even the earthly things. How could Jesus tell of the heavenly things? By that time He may have had the impress of memory in respect to His pre-existent condition.

We are to tell the heavenly things, but not to the natural man. "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." (Matt. 7:6.) Our Lord said that He had many things to tell His disciples, but that they could not receive them until the Holy Spirit came. (John 16:12,13.) And, "The Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus

was not yet glorified." (John 7:39.) "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned"; "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:14,10.) Now if the Holy Spirit reveals some of the deep things to us, how much *more* could the perfect mind of our Lord enter into the holy things?

"THE GLORY WHICH I HAD WITH THEE"

(7) Our Lord's words, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own self, with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was" (John 17:5), would not signify that He had no knowledge of His prospective share in the divine nature. He had the assurance of the Scriptures, one of which was that He should be very high; another that the Lord would give unto Him the Kingdom; another says that Jehovah God would "divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the

strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death" (Isa. 53:12); still another says, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." (Psa. 110:4.) He was to be both a Priest and a King of very high state and honor.

Probably our Lord knew these things fully after He was begotten of the Holy Spirit, even as St. Paul was caught away to the third heaven and received knowledge of wonderful things "which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (2 Cor. 12:4.) And so it is most probable that our Lord Jesus had some special revelation; for we read that He said that "as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26); thus indicating His knowledge of the fact that both He and the Church would share in the divine nature and inherency of life.

Our Lord's words show that He was not wishing to aspire to these glorious things. Very humbly He said, "Father, I have come to do Thy will. Father, I shall

perform the work Thou hast given Me to do and I shall be glad to be returned to the glory I had with Thee—to ask nothing as a favor. I am glad that I have had this privilege, and I think that I shall not suffer by reason of My obedience to Thy will. I shall be glad, therefore, to be with Thee in the glory that I shared with Thee before the world was."

He did not say to the Father, "Do not forget to pay Me; do not forget what Thou didst promise." No. He did the Father's will without any thought of compensation connected with it. So with us. Anyone who looks for the divine nature merely *as a reward* and feels that it is due him, is taking an improper view. We should feel that to be on the side of righteousness and to be identified with our Lord Jesus is a great privilege, if there be no reward of the divine nature at all; but the thought of the reward is a great incentive to run patiently for something super-abundant, exceedingly beyond what we could have asked or thought."

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NOTHING TOO GOOD FOR GOD'S SERVICE

"If there be any blemish therein, as if it be lame or blind, or have any ill-blemish, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God." --Deut. 15:21.--

SUCH an injunction to the house of servants under Moses is, perhaps, more necessary to the house of sons under Christ (Heb. 3:5,6), than many are apt to suppose. Inborn selfishness generally suggests that it would be a pity to sacrifice the best things, which could be used to advantage in so many other ways. And it is because this is generally done unconsciously that we now discuss this subject, with a view of helping the true-hearted out of the difficulty. Truly our hearts are exceedingly deceitful and require constant watching as respects their real motives, which they sometimes hide even from the loyal-hearted sons of God.

How often we have seen Christian parents, lovers of the Lord and his cause, who at times would bemoan their own inability to be actively engaged in the Lord's service, and who loved and admired the sacrifices of brethren and sisters in the colporteur service, who, to their injury, held back their own sons and daughters. Their reasoning seems to be that the work of the evangelist, as a colporteur, is good enough for those who have no education, or for such as are untalented; but they would have their children aim *higher* in life;--they would accept the Lord's bounty and expend it upon their children to give them an education, and then point them to medicine or law or literature or school-teaching as honorable and remunerative fields for their talents and education.

What a great mistake! what a sad mistake! How ashamed they will feel, if they ever get into the Kingdom, when looking back they will see how lightly they esteemed the wonderful privilege of being co-workers with God in this present time! How vastly different will be their views then, respecting the *importance* of medicine and law and schools and literature and marriage! How ashamed they will be that they ever thought that the lean and the lame and the ill-favored were good enough to sacrifice to the Lord! --that none should think of colporturing but those who had no capacity for "worldly prosperity!"

On the contrary the consecrated parent should consecrate to the Lord not only his firstborn, but all of his children; and from infancy should be instilling into their minds and hearts that the proper course for all of God's people is to devote themselves in largest possible measure to the divine service. They should be taught to regard all of life's affairs with a view to rendering their all to his service in any possible capacity; and to pray that the Lord would accept and use their time, talent, influence--all--in his service, the most honorable service imaginable, and ultimately to be the most highly rewarded. The Apostle's teaching respecting marriage (1 Cor. 7:27-40) should be brought to their attention with the thought of the Apostle that it is not a condemnation of marriage in others, but one of the incidental sacrifices of those anxious to be most fully used in the Lord's service.

Not only so, but the Christian parent who discerns present truth should encourage his child not to strive for the higher education, but to be content with a common school education; because (1) to qualify himself for a profession would be to put before himself a temptation in that direction which would last through life; (2) because the

higher education of the present day in all colleges is so impregnated with the Evolution theory and Higher Criticism that the strong probability is that, like others, he would fall into skepticism, which will kill his devotion to the Lord, and he could only be induced to serve the Lord, even outwardly, by an honorable position and a good salary --if, indeed, it left him anything but morality as a substitute for religion!

On the contrary, every man and woman favored by the Lord with some knowledge of present truth should at once appreciate the true situation;--that the most talented and best educated have nothing worthy a place on the Lord's altar,--nothing worthy of acceptance in the Lord's service; and, forthwith, each should proceed to devote to it, daily and hourly, the *best* that he has and the *most* that he can, as being the greatest privilege that could ever be offered to angels or men--to be collaborators with God. Some, thus rightly appreciating the matter, are glad to leave medicine and business and schools to engage in the much grander and more important service of the gospel, as colporteur-evangelists;--to carry the printed message, of glad tidings of great joy, to all who have hearing ears. They rightly feel that they have not too much education or talent for so honorable a service as ambassadors for the King of Kings, but that if they had more and yet more, it would be to the interest of the work.

Would you have a young man or a young woman dash all the prospects and ambitions of the present life, and enter the colporteur work,--simply because they have accepted present truth and because you urge them to this service? No, indeed; we hope that none so minded will enter the work. The Lord seeketh not such for his service and representatives, and, hence, we do not seek them in his name. He seeks such as "count it all joy" to serve him and his at any sacrifice. Those entering the work against their will would, undoubtedly, do poor work and soon fall away from the truth.

But would you recommend a man of means,--a business man, for instance,--to dispose of his own business and go about colporturing? living on the interest of his money, or, perhaps, on the principal? Why not? ^[1]Should we not all have the Master's spirit, expressed by his words: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The Lord's true saints have no business of their *own*, for they gave their all to the Lord at consecration. Their business they manage as trustees for the Lord--not to be turned over at their death, in prosperous condition, to their children or their friends, possibly to their injury. It is to be used by the trustee as wisely as he knows how before death; for then his trusteeship ends, and he must render his account. (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-26.) If he can provide for the comfortable necessities of the present life for those dependent upon him, why should he do more for them, or for any cause longer delay to "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light"-- in the best manner open to him? Alas, how few of those who recognize their trusteeship are faithful to it and

[1] Aug. 22 Manna, Luke 2:49

will be able to render their report with joy, and to hear the Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Before "the harvest is past and the summer is ended," let us get awake, dear brothers and sisters, to our privileges and opportunities and use them thankfully. But let us not be misunderstood as commending anything impracticable. Only exceptional ones can do more than provide for their own personal comforts --even at the very liberal terms granted to colporteurs; and "he that provideth not for his own household is worse than an unbeliever" is the Apostle's argument. Those hampered by family encumbrances must show their love and devotion by some other form of sacrifice.

WE MUST BE ABOUT OUR FATHER'S BUSINESS

R5228 "The mind of Christ is the will to do the Father's will. Our Lord, when a child, said on one occasion to His mother, "How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49.) We recognize that we have a Heavenly Father, whose service is the highest possible service. Those who are His must have this spirit. The work of the New Creature must be the Heavenly work, otherwise he will have no proof that he has passed from the condemnation upon the human race and become a New Creature.

If we have the spirit of loyalty to God, to the Truth and to the brethren, we have the mind, the disposition of Christ. We also have indeed the weaknesses of the flesh, but it is our privilege to fight against these and to become more and more transformed in the spirit of our minds, to have our minds more centered in the Truth and in the service of the brethren.

If there is a decrease of zeal in this direction, then we may know that there is danger of going backward instead of forward. We hear of instances where the Lord's people have lost their first love and have become more or less cold. From our standpoint we may know when any have lost their first love. It is when they have allowed their minds to be led away to earthly things—love of family, of home, of worldly possessions, etc., all of which war against the Heavenly things. We should seek our pleasures, not from earthly sources, but from the Heavenly source. Very frequently we find Christians who tell us that they had a blessed experience when first they knew the Lord, but that they do not now feel as near to Him as formerly. If we probe the matter, we nearly always find that they went into business, or married, or did something which has warred against the Holy Spirit. We are not speaking against those things, but "If ye know *these things*, happy are ye if ye do them"—the things that make for our peace."

R5854 "HOW WE OUTWORK OUR GREAT SALVATION... Phil. 2:12,13

IN THIS chapter from which our text is taken, the Apostle Paul pays a beautiful tribute to the Church at Philippi... He urges them to continued faithfulness and earnestness in this good way. He desires that they make still further progress in the Master's likeness, working out in themselves through humility and obedience the character-development necessary, with fear and trembling, doing their own part in the attainment of the salvation to which they had been called in Christ.

This exhortation of St. Paul is designed likewise for the sanctified in Christ Jesus of today. He reminds us, as he did the Philippian Church, that we are to *work out* our salvation. Elsewhere the Scriptures inform

Let us give a concluding word to some of the humble and small-talented ones who have engaged in this service. They may, perhaps, be inclined to feel that they are of the *blemished* class of ill-favored ones represented in our text as unacceptable. But not so, dear brethren: the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin--covers all our natural blemishes and makes us worthy and acceptable in the Beloved. A cipher alone has no value, but it is a power indeed, when it follows 1; and so it is with us when we follow Christ--his merit gives us association and cooperation with him; gives us weight and influence and power for God and his cause. "Ye are complete in Him;" "accepted in the Beloved."

us that our salvation is by grace--that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by *His mercy* He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5.) These Scriptures are not contradictory. Our salvation is "not of ourselves, lest any man should boast." The Father has appointed the Lord Jesus to be our Savior; and it is through Him that our salvation is to be accomplished.

We cannot work out our own justification; but being justified by the blood of Christ and being called with the Heavenly Calling, we can do our share in this great work of our own preparation for our future station and glory. We do this by giving heed to the instructions of our Lord, by following the example which He has set us. We can never attain perfection in the flesh; but from the beginning our heart, our intention, must be wholly loyal, and day by day this heart intention must become more and more crystallized, fixed, in the way of righteousness. We must continue the work of bringing our body into subjection, and enlisting in the service of the Lord...

THE MARVELOUS GRACE OF GOD!

This is a wonderful work, a marvelous transformation! Selected from a race of bondslaves of sin, beings of a fleshly nature, depraved, death-stricken, sin-cursed, we are lifted out of the miry clay; we are washed, cleansed, from our pollution, our soiled rags of unrighteousness, and a new nature has been begun in us. Then our earthward tendencies are gradually bent Heavenward. We are transformed day by day, rising *up*, UP, until, our resurrection completed, the work of transformation fully accomplished, we are exalted to heights unimaginable--passing the nature and rank of angels, of cherubim, of seraphim, and every name that is named, and seated upon Messiah's Throne, beside the Infinite Son of God, partakers of His glorious nature--the nature of Jehovah Himself--the Divine nature!

Can mortal man conceive so marvelous a glory? The very thought of such a Calling should cause us to bow our hearts in the dust before our God, realizing our great unworthiness of such stupendous grace--of bliss so transcendent! What can we render unto the Lord that can fittingly demonstrate our gratitude, our thankfulness, for so unspeakable a favor? Surely, the most faithful service we can give is but a very feeble return to Him who has so loved us, so blessed us, so honored us!

We are joint-heirs with the Lord of Glory to this wonderful inheritance, if only we are faithful unto death and keep our garments white. To us "old things have passed away, and all things have become new." As old creatures we had no standing with God; we were feeding on the beggarly elements of the world. We were dead in trespasses and in sins. It is only as New Creatures that we have any standing, that we can please God, that we can work for

Him. It is this New Creature that the Apostle is addressing in our text.

OUR GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

As we have made a consecration of ourselves to God, our sins are all under the blood, and the new life has begun in us. We are under a solemn contract to see that the work of transformation steadily progresses. When the Father accepted our offering and our vows to Him, and granted us His Holy Spirit, He did not give us the full consummation of our hopes, but merely an "earnest of our inheritance." Our agreement was to be dead to the world, dead to earthly things, and alive toward God. It is therefore for each of us to demonstrate in our words, in our actions, in our thoughts, that everything in this contract is bona fide on our part--that we *meant* every word of it. When we become children of God, our one ambition should be to prove our loyalty to God, our loyalty to our Covenant of Sacrifice. Was it not so with our Lord Jesus?

Our Lord came into the world to be our Redeemer. But He was not the Redeemer when He was born, nor when He was thirty years of age, until He made His consecration. He was called the Savior from His birth, only in a prospective sense. He became our Redeemer in the real, the official, sense when He was baptized of John in Jordan, and the Holy Spirit came upon Him in begetting power. Then it remained for Him during the three and a half years of His active service to work out that consecration. Every act of life during that crucial period was the fulfilling of His Covenant of Sacrifice. He had covenanted to sacrifice His human nature with all its conditions and possibilities, in order that He might carry out the Father's purpose. For this cause He came into the world, and He faithfully fulfilled His Covenant. His glorious reward was the Divine nature and the authority to execute all the Father's great Program.

OUR COVENANT IDENTICAL WITH CHRIST'S

...All the children of God who are true to their covenant are working out their salvation from day to day. It is a work of sacrifice, a daily work of crucifixion of the flesh.

...We have not undertaken a light thing. It is a very heavy responsibility. Our eternal interests are in the balance--the issue of life or death. Those who win the prize will be heirs of God to the highest honors and glories which have ever been offered--to a glory and honor beyond human power to imagine! We believe that no such offer will ever again be made.

The Son of God holds the position next to Jehovah, and can never have but one Bride. Surely, then, there is need that we work out our salvation with fear and trembling--with great carefulness, with great earnestness, in respect to everything in connection with it! We should be keenly appreciative of the fact that it is the most wonderful thing in all the Universe of God!"