

THE HERALD OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

VOL. XXXVII August / September, 1954 Nos. 8-9

"Hope to the End"

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." - 1 Peter 1:13.

THE Apostle brings to our attention in our text above two necessary things to observe in our walk of faith if we would enduringly and triumphantly hope to the end for the grace to be revealed.

As it is generally helpful for Bible students to refer to varying translations of the Greek and Hebrew text for greater confirmation of the expressions of truth, we quote the following:

Weymouth: "Therefore gird up your minds and fix your hopes calmly and unfalteringly upon the boon that is soon to be yours, at the re-appearing of Jesus 'Christ."

The 20th Century: "Therefore brace up your minds and exercise the strictest control and fix your hopes on the blessings to come."

Diaglott: "Therefore, having girded up your mind, and being vigilant, do you hope perfectly for the gift."

Rotherham: "Keeping sober perseveringly direct your hope unto the favor being borne along to you in the revealing of Jesus Christ."

In these quotations there are three important maxims to observe which will prepare one to receive the grace to be later revealed:

First: To gird up or 'brace up the loins of our minds-strengthen -our habits of thought, accept certain principles of life and truth as our guide, and appreciate intelligently the purpose for which we hope all of which implies concentration on the things of God and his divine plan as revealed through his Word.

Secondly: To be sober, calm, vigilant, with strict control of our minds and hopes.

Thirdly: To hope, anticipate, contemplate convincingly the promised grace or favor of our great objective. All who have been privileged to discern the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus should pursue these virtues, endeavoring to make that calling and election sure by strengthening their purpose, renewing their determination, redoubling diligence, and putting away all unnecessary cares and burdens and, as the Apostle Paul encourages, "Run with patience the race set before us." - Heb. 12:3.

What Peter wrote to the strangers scattered, and the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, applies also to ourselves in the close of this Gospel Age, and reminds us that they had been begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (1 Pet. 1:3.) For them, an inheritance which was incorruptible and undefiled had been purchased and was awaiting them. For them, a salvation was ready to be revealed which would- help them to forget their heaviness through manifold trials, also, grace was to be brought unto them at the glorious unveiling of Jesus Christ their Lord. They had been partakers of Christ's sufferings, and soon they would be glad with exceeding joy and receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away. God would minister to them an abundant entrance, that is a choral and triumphant entrance into the Kingdom of their Lord and Savior. Though the heavens and the earth should be dissolved, the elements melt with fervent heat, they might confidently reckon on the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

If the Apostle Paul may be termed the Apostle of faith, John the Apostle of love, Peter is rightly styled the Apostle of hope, in bringing to our attention these many blessings, and the lofty privileges of grace bestowed on those who have put their complete trust in God. What an incentive, what an inspiration for us, to see to it that we gird up the loins of our mind, be sober, and hope to the end for further graces or favors to be revealed and bestowed at the end of our pilgrimage. Peter reasons (2 Pet. 3:11): Since all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness. In closing his letter he warns us not to fall from steadfastness, but to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 3:17.) Shall we not, then, brethren, gird up the loins of our mind and keep it awake and alert for truth, harnessing our powers of thought that we may meditate upon those matters for which we have a "Thus saith the Lord."

GIRD UP THE LOINS OF YOUR MIND

When Jesus was explaining to his disciples the need of seeking first the Kingdom of God, he said (Luke 12:34-37) "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning [let truth be the predominating characteristic of your whole being]; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will-come forth and serve them." Let your mind and heart be always free from the burden of concern for non-essential reasoning of matters which tend to entangle, or hinder your spiritual growth in grace and knowledge of God, or things that would frustrate the anticipation of your hope in Christ. To gird up the loins of the mind is of course an- allusion to the custom of Oriental nations, who, wearing long, loose garments, would gather them up, or gird them to their loins for travel or work. Since it is by the *renewing* of our mind that we are transformed, how important it is that we bring "every thought into obedience to Christ."

"Stand therefore," says the Apostle Paul (Eph. 6:14), "having your loins girt about with truth." Endeavor to bring all your thoughts and activities into harmony with truth as clearly revealed, seeking always to emulate Christ Jesus, your Master, the Apostles, and the true saints of God. "Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." To be strong in the Lord is an essential virtue in the character of all who aspire to the great gifts of God. We do well to recall the examples of fortitude and fixity of purpose given us in Holy Writ: the strength of Daniel (Dan. 1:8) who purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the King's meat or wine; the self-sacrificing spirit of Moses who said to Israel (Exod. 32:30): "You have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." Moses acknowledged the sin to God and sought their forgiveness, and said: "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Self-sacrifice! What a power in such a life! This same spirit was manifested by the Apostle Paul when he said: "I could wish that myself were accursed [cut off] from Christ for my brethren." (Rom. 9:3.) Also by John when he declared that Christ "laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay -down our lives for the brethren." - 1 John 3:16.

The second thought in our subject is sobriety. Be sober. A sober person is temperate, grave, reverent, steadfast, and vigilant; not, sordid or morose, but happy, calm, free. To be vigilant, sober, is to be alert, watchful, attentive to discover danger or to provide safety, usually with forethought and vision of the future, rather than concern or fretful for the present. Peter exhorts (1 Pet. 4:7) "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer."

Soberness or steadfastness is a beautiful, dignified gem of the Christian character. With it one possesses control of thought and mind, is usually able to refrain from undue excitement, well poised in judgment. The Apostle speaks in the same sense when writing to the Church at Philippi (4:5): "Let your moderation [your sweet reasonableness or gentleness], be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Peter brings to our attention the importance of this quality of mind and heart in the Christian warfare (1 Pet. 5:8): "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith. The God of all grace, who hath called you unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." - 1 Cor. 15:58.

SAVED BY HOPE

Our third point is that of hope -- "Hope to the end." Hope is desire and expectation. The Apostle in Romans 8:24 states: "We are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." And in chapter 4, verse 18 (Rom. 4:18), he illustrates the thought by referring to Abraham: "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations." Or as *Weymouth* states the matter: "Who under hopeless circumstances hopefully believed." With this example should we not hope perseveringly to the end. Hope is exemplified throughout the Scriptures. David says (Psa. 42:11): "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 20:12), going out to meet the enemy in battle, prayed: "O our God, . . . we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." Hope, then, is to cherish a desire for some good, with expectancy of obtaining it, to trust with confidence its forthcoming realization. "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the holy spirit." (Rom. 15:13.) "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." - Heb. 6:19.

Having, then, girded up the loins of our mind, and having put on sobriety, steadfastness, and become fully persuaded in hope, and hoping to the end, we should be somewhat prepared for the grace, or graces, that are to be borne along to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

We are of course aware that the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus is the crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to the overcomers who love his revealing. But let us notice, and rejoice, in the additional grace or favor due for us at that same revealing. The crown of life is the great objective of the overcomers' quest, and the crowning gift of God's love for them, which at present we can but vaguely comprehend. To fully grasp its worth at present is beyond our limitations of vision. There are graces, favors, privileges we can and we should more fully appreciate leading up to this transcending, stupendous honor of joint-heirship with Christ.

"THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE"

What, then, we ask, are these graces to which we are coming? We reply: The Apostle in writing to the Hebrews (Heb. 12:14), after exhorting the brethren to follow peace with all and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, counsels them also to look diligently lest any fail of the grace of God, and reminds them of the terrifying experiences of Israel, when God spake to them direct. For, says the Apostle, you are not come unto the mount that burned, with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which Israel could not endure, but entreated that the word should not be spoken to them again except through Moses. So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

Heb. 12:22-24 continue: "*But ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*"

These, dear reader, we suggest are some of the graces, the favors, the honors, the glory, and the excellencies that are to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ our Lord, all of which are but a prelude and inauguration of the crown of life, immortality.

But you are coming unto Mount Zion, to that elevation which draws and captures your affections, inspires your heart and mind, increases your hope, captivates your very 'being, your soul, and the thought of which influences all your actions. The precious promises assure us that God and Christ Jesus are to dwell there, even as Jesus declared (John 14), If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

In David's time Mount Zion of Jerusalem was the center of divine worship, the place where the temple stood, and where the worship of Jehovah was celebrated and maintained. It was the acceptable place where God dwelt, by a visible symbol, the shekinah light above the mercy seat, which represented the place of meeting between God and man.

David, typifying the individual experiences and sentiments or emotions of the Church of Christ in this Age, made Zion the chief joy of his heart and mind. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." (Psa. 27:4.) "Praise waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion: and unto thee shall the vow be performed." (Psa. 65:1.) Obadiah 21, prophesies: "Saviors shall come up on Mount Zion." "Jehovah hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation.

This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; I have desired it." (Psa. 132:13.) And eventually Mount Zion will be the joy of the whole earth. (Psa. 48:2.) What a privilege it has been for all who have accepted the invitation, to be there, and to be stones in the spiritual temple, by virtue of being new creatures in Christ, by faith, having also, as the Apostle Paul remarks (Phil. 3:20) "our conversation [our general manner of life] . . . in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior." Moreover, John the Revelator (Rev. 14:1) declares that in vision he "looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and with him 144,000, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." What a glorious prospect, to be there and to be associated with Christ as members of his Body-the glorified Church complete with their Lord, represented as the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." - Rev. 21.

Let us regard ourselves as already dwellers in that city of Mount Zion and live and act as if we saw its splendor and partook of its joy, as the Apostle Paul exhorts in Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably ... "For here have we no continuing *city*, but we seek one to come."

Then, we have, by faith, approached an innumerable company of angels. David said (Psa. 68:17): "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy." Here we have myriads of angels in joyful convocation, and the general assembly of the Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven, a kind of first-fruits of God's creatures. The word assembly refers properly to an assembly or convocation of a whole company 'gathered to celebrate some public festival. This one 'is the 'first of its kind in the history of' the whole of God's universe. It is distinctly unique for this reason: It is composed of the Church of the Firstborn and with them an innumerable company of angels, obviously to whom the Firstborn ones will be introduced.

There are other instances recorded in the Word, of similar assemblies consisting of angels or messengers, who rejoiced together over God's creative works: We read in Job 38: When the Lord Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind, he said, Gird up now thy loins like a man; and answer me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

At the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:13), there was another time of exultation, when suddenly there was a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God, and singing, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to men. We may not be able to appreciate so fully, nor in quite the same way as the angelic hosts the ecstasy, the rapture, or joy they experienced when they were able to realize that the life principle of the great Co-creator with the Father, "the Logos," had been transferred to Mary, and was now clothed with human organism and had been brought forth on earth as a perfect human child. He was the One who would exceed all others of God's creation in faithfulness, obedience, and suffering the Lamb that was to be announced as worthy to open the book and loose the seals thereof. Later John heard the voices of many angels round about the throne with four living ones and twenty-four elders singing a new song, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing."

On the occasion of the general assembly at Mount Zion there are not only myriads of angels, but with them the Church of the Firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, those who are *entitled* to heavenly citizenship and citizen privileges, enrolled and registered amongst the inhabitants of the heavenly realm. (Psa. 34; Heb. 1; Matt. 18:11.) Many of these angels have been guardians and close associates of the Firstborn all through the Gospel Age.

John again refers to this same general assembly in the announcement of the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:6) "I heard the voice of a great multitude, and the voice of many waters, and mighty thunderings, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

What, a glorious, transcending honor awaits the faithful in Christ Jesus! All their joys and sorrows, all their weaknesses and failures, victories and triumphs of grace have contributed to this privilege of being members of this general assembly and Church of the Firstborn, the overcomers of the Gospel Age, the Body of Christ.

And we are coming to God, the judge of all, throughout his vast universe -- the Church, the angels, and all mankind -- to God, the Creator, the Eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, who governs and directs all -- "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? ... Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance.... Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." - Isa. 40:12-29.

We also approach "the spirits of just men made perfect." Just and righteous men will find their home upon the earth, whereas, those called to Mount Zion, and to a Throne, will receive their promised change of nature, to heavenly citizenship, to be like their Lord, capable of discerning the heart sentiments, thoughts, and devotions of men, in the same way that our Heavenly Father discerns his children on the earth in all their devotions and personal contact with him. He that searches the heart knows what is the mind of the spirit. (Rom. 8:27.) The spirits of just men must therefore refer to those saints of God who, because of their faith in the promises, have been trained through life's experiences to become Princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16), trained prior -to the first advent of Jesus, and died in faith (Heb. 11:13-16), who also at the revelation of Jesus Christ will be resurrected to human perfection, ready and fully furnished to co-operate with the great Messiah in the glorious restoration of the human family to the same perfection. (Acts 3:19-21; Isa. 2:2-4.) "God having provided [however] some better thing for us, that they without US should not be made perfect." (Heb. 11:40.) "For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" by the Ancient Worthies and Prophets, to whom the faithful of the Gospel Age, the glorified Church, will be privileged 'to disclose the way of life, the way of holiness. Every one resurrected on earth will come under the jurisdiction of the restored Patriarchs, Prophets; Saints. - Micah 4:1-5.

We are also coming to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. By his sacrifice on behalf of Father Adam and his posterity, he will 'bring this New Covenant into full operation for the human family, revealing the way and the means whereby everlasting life, eternal peace, and good will may be the happy possession of all, to enjoy for the ages to come, when there shall be "no more death," and when everything that hath breath shall praise the Lord. - Psa. 150.

Finally, we come to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel-redemption and peace instead of vengeance and retribution. The shed blood of Jesus was the reality of which the offering of Abel was a type, as also the offerings of animals by Aaron under the Mosaic Law. "For it is not possible that the blood of (bulls and goats should take away sin." (Heb. 10:4.) "There are points of resemblance between Abel and Christ Jesus. Abel was a martyr. So

was Jesus. Abel was cruelly murdered. So was Jesus. Abel was slain by his brother; Jesus by his kindred brethren. Cain, the brother of Abel, bore the guilt of death. It was the brethren of Jesus who bore the guilt of His death. "His blood be on us, and on our children." - Matt. 27:25.

The Apostle concludes with a grave warning for those to whom his remarks are addressed (verse 25) "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." What a responsibility! How careful we should be! It is a very high honor and a very lofty privilege to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God and to be seated with Christ in the heavenlies. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things." - Heb. 1:1.

So, dear readers, for all these joys and honors of coming to Mount Zion and of being called to a throne, are we not inspired to more zealously, confidently, humbly, and meekly *gird* or *brace up* the loins of our mind, to increase in sobriety and steadfastness, to hope rejoicingly for the grace and graces that are borne along to us at the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Compensating blessings are given us all along the pilgrim way to encourage our hearts in submission, devotion, praise, that we may receive an abundant entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord. Let us, then, take courage and hope to the end.

- G. A. Ford, Eng.

"Paul, a Servant of Jesus Christ"

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel' of God." - Romans 1:1.

IT IS the purpose of this article to gather from the record of Paul's life, some of the things which make this man of God such an outstanding character in the history of the Church of God. As we touch a little on those things and note his unswerving oneness of purpose, his indomitable love and zeal, and the unmistakable evidences of what our God can, and will do when the door of the heart is flung wide open-surely we must marvel. Paul had learned his lesson, and *it had not been lost on him*. 'He had heard the voice of Jesus; the glory of the Lord had shone "round about" him; and his Lord had found in him a receptive heart, and said to him, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness ... delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, *and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*" - Acts 26:16-18.

Let us note Paul's next words: *"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."* Later on, he was to be fully tested in regard to obedience, and reference is often found in this epistles to this great element of the Christian faith. And for a good reason, too, for on obedience hangs all that faith and hope could desire. Like his Master, Paul was to learn "obedience through suffering," and like his Master, his final words of triumph spoke of *victory through suffering*.

In Paul's last letter there seems to be a note of sadness, a feeling that like *his* Master, he too had suffered reproach and desertion by some who were dear to him. 'However, notwithstanding the fact that this gave him pain, and perhaps a sense of frustration, he says, "The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; . . . And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly Kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever." Paul's love for his Lord, his unceasing efforts on behalf of those whom he loved and served at no small cost, in the way of tending to their spiritual needs -- those things were to him as nothing if so be that some measure

of blessing accrued therefrom. On the altar, his sacrifice was being consumed daily, and the intensity of his zeal stands out without parallel in the annals of the Christian Era.

CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY

Some of the churches he deemed it necessary to exhort to the setting aside of things which, *by their practice, could* hinder Christian development. Again and again, he speaks of the danger and result of the course followed by some of the brethren. Here and there, he pleads with them for a more Christ-filled 'life, and does not hesitate to say things which were objected to, owing to the shallowness of the lives of some. He says in -one place, "I am willing to spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less be loved." His heart ached and yearned for all of them, and there is something of a deep-seated sorrow in those words and in those of 2 Corinthians 12:14: ". . . I seek not yours, but you." Whatever could be laid to his charge, none could say that *he* had failed to exhort to a fuller and more acceptable life, the only "life that counts." And so the says, "I have *not shunned* to declare unto *you all the counsel of God.*"

Herein is a lesson for us. We are told to "exhort one another daily, while it is called Today," and, in so doing, "smooth things" may not always be practicable, and so, love has its hour of testing, and happy indeed is the one who accepts with due humility and respect the heart-searching words which find their murk and perhaps touch a sore spot.

Primarily Paul's one great desire was that he might "*know* him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." He realized that, "as yet," he had not reached the height of attainment which his Master had set as a standard of Christian development. To *know* Christ, to *love* as he loved, to be *obedient* in all things, to *follow his Lord-on* and on, through "honor and dishonor, . . . as unknown, and yet well known; . . . as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet *possessing all things*" -- *this is* the Paul to whom "Christ and him crucified" was the one ever absorbing theme at all times. No effort, be it great or small, was too large or too small, if thereby Jesus Christ was glorified in the hearts and minds of others. What are we doing along this line? Are we doing with our might all that our hands find to do, or are we of those who fail to see another's need of a comforting word, a cheery smile, "a lift along the way"?

We sing, 'Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love' - how does that sentiment work in us? We do well to remember that we have responsibilities which, *if not lived up to*, carry their own conviction. The Master's words of Matthew 25:40, 45, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," and, "Inasmuch as ye Aid it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me," are as potential today as ever they were. Year after year Paul trod more and more closely in his dear Master's steps. He made friends, whose love comforted and encouraged him. Note his words of 2 Corinthians 7:6: "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus." Yes, Paul needed that which might have 'been given to him more freely, *the practical and practiced love* of his brethren. One recalls the words of Proverbs 11:24: "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there *is that withholdeth* more than is meet, *but it tendeth to poverty.*" Here again is a lesson for us. How potent are the Master's words, "As ye have done it."

SERVICE OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE

Each one of Christ's followers may be, in some way, a means of blessing to others. They may not feel that they are doing anything worthy of merit, but their unconscious influence may start waves of blessing which, as they widen and deepen, shall restore faltering faith, and add, in no small degree, to the inward peace and rest of others. In this they will be "taking on" more of the Christ-likeness, and thus will be growing in grace and into the perfect image of their Lord and Master. Paul's outstanding zeal is worthy of our most earnest consideration. His "*this one thing I do*"

attitude should provoke in us that which is implied—a fixed, definite purpose to live a life in which Christ is to be seen in us. Not that we may have the sinless perfection of our Lord, but that we may, by his spirit and grace, so "walk in newness of life" that the flesh is Spirit-controlled, and that, as trials and testings come upon us, we may raise the mighty arm of faith and say with the Apostle: "None of these things move me." - Acts 20:24.

What can Satan do with a man like that? To Paul, Christ was his "all in all, his joy, his contemplation, his sheet-anchor, his life. Christ was to him an object of adoration, praise, and worthy of all acceptance. To him there was no greater joy than that in which Christ was magnified and the Father glorified. Paul had seen the unity which Jesus was stressing in his illustration of the vine and its branches, and his relationship with the Father and Son was such that his supreme faith could, and did, produce a confidence which his words of Romans 8:33-39 unmistakably reveal. Yes, Paul had felt, and borne, "the marks" of a consecrated life. And yet he says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword? ... *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*" "*More than conquerors!*" Our God looks for, and wants, *conquering, overcoming Christians*. He knows the paths we tread, and he knows our every need. He knows of our victories and our defeats.

"God knows -- not I -- the devious way Wherein my faltering feet must tread, Before into the light of day My steps from out this gloom are led. And since my Lord the path doth see What matters if 'tis hid from me?"

Throughout his Christian experience, Paul must have had moment of care, anxiety, and, at times, a sense of frustration. His words of 2 Corinthians 11, especially verses 24 to 28, suggest those things -- stripes, imprisonments, beaten with rods, stoned, shipwrecked, in perils, wearied in pain, etc. Time goes on, and he, "the prisoner of Jesus Christ," is at Rome. Granted some 'liberties, he continued to "spend" himself on behalf of those whom he refers to as "saints," the "Church," and "beloved brethren." Soon he is to pay the supreme price for his allegiance to him whom he calls "the Lord of glory." Can we not envision this man of God, as, while awaiting his trial (the outcome of which he has no doubt), he prays for grace and strength whereby he can be still used to the praise and glory of the Father and Son, in service to his brethren, and also that he might not fail when the final hour of testing shall come? Can we not sense the pathos of his words as he writes to his beloved Timothy, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine," and, "At my first answer, no man stood with me but all forsook me." Yet, in spite of this he says, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." (2 Tim. 2:10.) Can we not see the tears which came unbidden as his tired, weak eyes looked *up*, in the knowledge that soon, very soon, 'the fight would -be over and the Master's words of John 17:24 be his reward and, portion? With ineffable joy that was seen in a face from which radiated, the glory of the Lord, even though it were marred by time and sorrow, he exclaims, "If we be dead with him, *we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.*" - 2 Tim. 2:11, 12.

Yes, beloved, Paul had reached the stage where the love of which he speaks in 1 Corinthians 13 was seen to be possible and practicable. His faith in his God was unbounded. Seated there, a prisoner, he writes to the brethren at Philippi. Thoughts fraught with a great love and free from condemnation are expressed on their behalf. "As always" he stresses above all else, Christ, the crucified and risen Christ. He reiterates his faith and purpose, and in love exhorts to a fuller and richer life. His conception of a Christ filled life is not one of a limited or partial nature. With the assurance of one who reaches, by the hand of faith, to the throne of God, he declares, "I can *do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.*"

Paul realized his need of that spirit and grace which only Christ can give. And as he finds in Christ a sure means of grace, he sees the need of others too, and affirms that "My God shall supply *all your need* according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." We note that Paul says, "My God." It is out of our personal experience that we dare to recommend our friend or physician, and so, out of Paul's experience he unhesitatingly declares, "My God shall supply all your need." But it may be asked, "What has his God done for him?" Here we find him, aged, penniless, all but friendless, hated and persecuted, awaiting a violent death, and yet, he recommends to those in any need, *his* God! A seemingly strange claim is this, to be made by a homeless exile, beaten, scourged, stoned, shipwrecked, misunderstood, mobbed, and imprisoned! It would seem that this man's experience was a poor recommendation for the God in whom he so implicitly trusted. But wait! let us go back and look in upon this greatest of all Apostles, and ask him how he can say those words -of Philippians 4:19. We ask, "What need of yours has your God supplied? Why, you are utterly stripped of everything!"

Instant is his answer, "Having nothing, yet I *possess all things*."

"Are you not worried or fearful?"

"No, I have the peace of God which passeth *all* understanding."

"Are you never lonely?"

"Never, for with me is the angel of God whose I am, and whom I serve."

"Does not your hopeless situation and the strife torn condition of the Churches make you gloomy and pessimistic, at least sometimes?"

"Not for a moment. Rejoice, and again I say, Rejoice."

"But Paul, you will certainly be condemned by Nero, and put to death."

And with a holy light in his face, *Paul* says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

And, as a last attempt to understand Paul's confident assurance, we say to him, "What a life you have lived since your conversion that day when the Lord met you near Damascus, estranged from your family, hounded from place to place, toiling through the night so as to preach during the day, ceaselessly driven by the spirit, in perils everywhere, in the city streets and mountain roads, among strangers and among your own people -- what a life!"

"Why," he answers, "to me to live is Christ; *I have all things and ,abound, I have peace within, and peace with God. I have joy unspeakable and full of glory; I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him; I have lacked no good thing.*"

So Paul commends his God, the God who has never once failed him, the covenant-keeping God, to all *who* are in any need. Emphatically he declares, "My God shall supply *all your need* according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." And so ends our meditation on "Paul, a servant of Jesus 'Christ.'" The thoughts expressed fall far short of that which such a subject merits, but if

received in "honest and good hearts," something will be achieved to the praise and glory of him who can, and will, use even the least of his own to that end. As we take God at his word, and feed at his table, the life that now is will be fuller of his love, deeper in its sanctification, and richer in the joys which are the Christian's prerogative. Isaiah says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," and *even in this life*, peace, God's eternal peace, "the peace that passeth all understanding," may be ours. Let us then "walk circumspectly, redeeming the time," and so go forward in faith, hope, and love, and the prayer:

"I do not ask, dear Lord, that life may be
A pleasant road;
I do not ask that Thou wouldst take from me
Aught of its load;
I do not ask that flowers should always spring
Beneath my feet;
I know too well the poison and the sting
Of things too sweet.
For one thing only, Lord, dear Lord, I plead:
Lead me aright,
Tho' strength should falter, and tho' heart should bleed,
Through peace to light.
"I do not ask, dear Lord, that Thou shouldst shed
Full radiance here;
Give but a ray of peace, that I may tread
Without a fear;
I do not ask my cross to understand,
My way to see;
Better, in darkness, just to feel Thy hand,
And follow Thee.
Joy is like restless day, but peace Divine
Like quiet night;
Lead me, O Lord, till perfect day shall shine,
Through peace to light."

- *W. Wainwright.*

Lessons from the Life of Joseph

Scripture Reading: Psalm 105:17-23; Genesis chapters 37, 39-50

(Continued from last issue)

EVERY side of Joseph's character is beautiful. Everywhere we see him he bears himself nobly. We pass now to another chapter in his life, and here, too, we shall find the beauty unsullied, the splendor undimmed. We look at Joseph and his father, and we see that through all the strange and varied experiences of life he kept his love for his father warm and tender.

There is one incident which at first thought seems to have shown forgetfulness of his old home. When his first son was born he named him Manasseh. "For God," said he, "bath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." But he did not mean that the coming of this child into his home blotted out all memory of his father. The words reveal the heart hunger of Joseph for home, love, and domestic ties. He had been torn away from these, and for more than thirteen years had lived unblest by human affection. Now the hunger of his heart was met by the child he held in his arms. He had now a home of his own, and in the new joy, the years of hungry, unmet love were forgotten, as the earth forgets the desolation of winter when spring comes with all its glory of bursting life and bloom and foliage.

But his father was not forgotten even in the gladness of his own happy home. All through the story of the brothers' visits we have glimpses of Joseph's love for his father. Little did those men from Canaan know how eagerly the great governor watched their words to hear about their father. And when he pressed on them the charge that they were spies, they dropped the words: "Thy servants are sons of one man. . . . The youngest is this day with our father." They spoke carelessly, but their words told Joseph that his father was yet alive, sending a thrill of gladness into his heart.

The Courtesy of a Tender Filial Love

The brothers went home and came again, and when they stood before the governor, almost his first word was the inquiry, "Is your father well -- the old man of whom ye spoke? Is he yet alive?" The brothers saw nothing in the words 'but the fine courtesy of a noble gentleman; yet under the courtesy there throbbed a tender, filial love. When Judah presented his plea for Benjamin, referring again and again to his father at home, his old age, his loneliness, his bereavement, his love for Benjamin--so deep and tender that he would die if the lad were not returned to him -- he little knew what chords he was touching in the soul of the great man to whom he was speaking. It was this picturing of the aged, sorrowing father which most of all moved Joseph as he listened to Judah's words. When the plea was ended, Joseph broke down--could not refrain himself longer, and said amid sobs, "I am Joseph." Then his very next words were, "Doth my father yet live?"

A few minutes later, after the passionate assurance of forgiveness had been given to quiet the hearts of his brothers in their consternation, he bade them hasten to their father--"my father", he says now--and say unto him, "Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come clown unto me, tarry not. . . . Ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither." He sent also wagons to bring his father over the rough roads as gently as possible; and presents--twenty asses carrying provisions and comforts for his father's use on the journey.

Weeks must have passed while the caravan slowly wended its way to Canaan, and while preparations for breaking up the old home and moving were progressing, and while the family journeyed again toward Egypt. At last, however, word came to Joseph that his father was approaching; and he made ready his chariot and went to meet him. Who can tell the tenderness of that meeting! The Bible never indulges in sentimental narration, and yet the picture its words present is very touching. "Joseph presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." It had been twenty-two years since Joseph, a lad of seventeen, had gone away from home to carry messages and tokens to his brothers, expecting in a few days to return. He had never seen his father's face since that morning, and the pent-up love of all the years found expression in this greeting.

Here again the character of Joseph shines in brilliant splendor. Egypt was then the first nation of the world in its civilization, its refinement, and culture. The court of Pharaoh was a place of great splendor. Jacob was a plain shepherd, lowly, unconventional in manners, without worldly rank or honor, withered, limping, famine-driven. Far apart were these two men, the governor of Egypt and the patriarch of Canaan. But the love in Joseph's heart for his father was so strong and so loyal that he never thought of the difference, and he led the old shepherd into the presence of the great king with pride. He told Pharaoh of the coming of his father as eagerly as if Jacob too had been a king. He made provision for his father, also, in Egypt, and, nourished him as long as the old man lived. When Jacob was dying, Joseph stood watching by his bedside, the Prime Minister of Egypt by the old shepherd, with beautiful filial devotion.

Through all the years his love continued warm and tender. Amid the splendors of rank and power he never forgot the old man, waiting in sorrow and longing, in his tent in Canaan. When his father came to him, bent, withered, limping, he honored him as if he had been a king. During the remaining years of his life he nourished him in almost royal state. When he was dead he honored him with the burial of a prince.

"Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother"

All this illustrates the nobleness of Joseph's character. The lesson is plain. Children should honor their parents. Nothing more sadly mars the beauty of a life than anything which shows want of filial love and respect. Children never come to an age, while their parents live, when they may cease to treat them with affection and honor, in return for unselfish devotion, self-denial, and care on their behalf in the days of infancy and childhood. These are debts we can never pay save by love that stops at no cost or sacrifice, nor flags in its faithfulness, until we have laid away the revered forms to rest in the grave.

The beautiful example of Joseph should inspire in all children whose parents are living, a deep desire to give them comfort, gladness, and tender care as long as they live. If we are blessed with wealth or with plenty, they should share it who shared their all with us in days gone by, perhaps pinched themselves that we might not want, or that we might be better fitted for life. If we have risen to higher position and greater honor than our parents had, we should bring them into the sunshine that is ours, that the benediction of our favored life may brighten and sweeten their old age. If they are a little peculiar, or odd in their ways, lacking some of the refinements of our more fashionable life, we should remember that these are only outside disfigurements, and that beneath, "beat hearts of -love, and dwell spirits that are noble with the nobleness of Christlikeness. Even if parents have marred their lives by sin which has brought shame, it were better, like Noah's nobler sons, to close our eyes and to fling the mantle of filial love over the shame.

There is another part of the story of Joseph and his father which has its lessons. We turn back to Hebron, to the time when the brothers came home from Egypt after Joseph had made himself known to them. They told their father that Joseph was alive, and that he was the governor of Egypt, but the old man could not believe the tidings. His heart was overwhelmed. For more than twenty years he had mourned Joseph as dead. Now to hear that he was alive in Egypt was too much for the old father. "His heart fainted, for he believed them not."

His sons sought to make him believe, repeating the words of Joseph. While he still listened, bewildered, doubting, the wagons Joseph had sent to carry him to Egypt were driven to the door; and the asses bearing the good things of Egypt also appeared. Now Jacob was convinced; his spirit revived. "And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." Why did the sight of the wagons help Jacob to believe that Joseph was alive? Wagons were not known in Canaan at that time, at least such wagons as those sent from Egypt. Joseph must indeed have sent them. So the fruits and other things sent to Jacob's door were unmistakably from Egypt. They could not have grown any place but beside the Nile.

"As Seeing Him Who is Invisible"

All this is suggestive and illustrative of the way we are helped in this world to believe in the existence of Jesus Christ in heaven. We know that Jesus died on the cross, slain by wicked hands. We know that He was laid in the grave, and that a stone was rolled before the door. The Gospel comes to us, telling us that He is alive. Note here again the similarity of Joseph to Christ. Joseph was alive in Egypt, that was what they told Jacob. Jesus Christ is alive in heaven, that is what the Gospel tells us. Not only was Joseph alive, he was ruler over all the land of Egypt. Jesus is alive for evermore, beyond death; and He is ruler over all things, King of kings and Lord of lords. Jacob was convinced Joseph was alive in Egypt when he saw the tokens he had sent. Christ sends us blessings out of heaven, which prove to us that He is really alive there and in power. Do there not come answers to *your* prayers when you plead with God? Do there not come comforts for your sorrows when your heart is burdened?

Canaan was famine-stricken. There was no bread in all the land. The people were starving. In Egypt there were great storehouses. From these supplies certain good things came to Jacob's door. Somebody had sent them -- somebody who knew him and loved him. They said it was Joseph and the old man believed it.

This world is famine-stricken. There is no bread here for our souls. Heaven has its storehouses. Daily there come to you from these reserves of goodness, supplies of blessings. There are blessings just for you. They meet your needs exactly. They come just at the right time. You say, "There must be some one in heaven who knows me; some one who keeps his eye upon me and knows what I need, and then sends his good things to me at the right moment." Yes, that some one is Christ. He is not dead-He is alive and on the throne. These good things that come into your days, with their joy and brightness, are all from Him.

Yes, we know that Christ lives and reigns in heaven, for every day blessings come to us that could have come from no land but the heavenly land, and that no one but Jesus could have sent. The forgiveness of our sins, the peace that fills our heart, the joy that comes in sorrow, the help that comes in weakness the human friendships that bring such benedictions, the answers to prayer, the blessings of providence-who but Jesus could send all these heavenly good things to us? These are the best proofs to us that Jesus lives and rules in the land of blessedness and glory.

Foretaste of Good Things to Come

To know that Christ, though unseen, is yonder in heaven, that He ever lives to make intercession for us, that He sends 'blessings down to us on the earth, heaven's good things, is a very precious truth. Even this is a joy that thrills our hearts. But there is something better: The wagons came and took Jacob away from that land of hunger, with its mere handfuls of the good things of the land of plenty, and bore him right into the heart of the country where his son ruled. He was met on the borders of the country by the son who had died to him, but still lived. He was welcomed by him with love's warmest welcome. He was presented to the king who bade him dwell in the best of the land. There he stayed, close to his son, nourished by him. No longer did he have merely a few of the good things, sent from far away, as tokens of the abundance in store yonder; he dwelt now in the very midst of the storehouses and had all that he could wish.

We see how beautifully true all this parable is, in its application to Christ's believing ones in this world. Here our joy is very sweet, but we have only little foretastes of the heavenly good things. By and by the wagons will come for us to take us into the very presence of Christ.

When Jacob got into the carriage and it drove away, he was not sad. He was leaving his old walks and the place of his sorrows, but he was going to his son. He was leaving famine and want, and was going to a land of plenty. That is what is in prospect for us. We shall leave the place of toil and care, to find rest. We shall leave the land of tears and separations, to go into the presence of the loved and lost. Our Savior will meet us on the edge of that blessed country. He will welcome us with tenderest love. He will present us to His Father -- not ashamed to own us as His friends, His brothers, His sisters, before heaven's angels. He will give us a place near to Himself. There He will nourish us with heaven's choicest fruits. Our Joseph has gone before us to prepare a place for us: and when we are prepared for the place He will come again and receive us unto Himself, that where He is there we may be also.

Old Age and Death

Word was sent to Joseph one day that his father wished to see him. The old man was thinking of his departure. He knew he must die in Egypt, but he did not wish to be buried in that strange land; he wanted to lie in the land of promise. So he asked Joseph to swear to him, in the rude fashion of the times, that he would not bury him in Egypt.

It was no mere sentiment that made the old man, as his end drew nigh, crave to lie beside his father and his wife in the cave of Macbpelah; it was his strong faith in God's promise to give Canaan to his descendants. He believed that the promise would be fulfilled and he wanted his grave to be where the future home of his children would be. Then he wanted his family, though still abiding in Egypt, to have a constant reminder that Egypt was not their home. He knew that his grave in the land of promise would continually draw upon their hearts.

Then came another incident. Jacob was sick. Joseph heard it and hastened with his two sons to his father's bedside. Jacob adopted these 'boys as his own, taking them in among his own sons, kissing and embracing them, then stretching out his thin, trembling hands and laying them on the heads of the lads, while he uttered this beautiful benediction upon them: "God, before whom thy fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them."

Then we have the death scene. All the sons are there, and the dying Patriarch in prophetic words, unveils the future of each in turn. We need not linger on these predictions, interesting as they are, but we will note the blessing pronounced upon Joseph:

"Joseph is a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a fountain;
His branches run over the wall.
The archers have sorely grieved him,
And shot at him, and persecuted him:
But his bow abode in strength,
And the arms of his hands were made strong
By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob;
(From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel,)
Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee;
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath,
Blessings of the breast, and of the womb.
The blessings of thy father
Have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors
Unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills:
They shall be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren."

Those were intensely solemn moments to Joseph. All his honors seemed small as he stood there by that bed and felt the touch of the hand now growing cold in death. At length the feeble voice ceased to speak. The blessings were all pronounced. Then came the dying-charge: "Bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron." And when Jacob made an end of charging his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his fathers.

Strange mystery of dying! How orphaned it leaves us when it is a father or mother that is gone. We never get ready to lose our parents. No matter how old they are, how ripe their life, how full their years, the time never comes when we can lose them without a pang. Life is never quite the same again. Something has gone out of our life, something very precious, which we never can have again. Never more a mother's prayers, lost and missed now for the first day since we were born. No more a father's love, thought, care, and hope in this world, wanting now first since infancy. The consciousness of bereavement is keener when a parent is taken away in the child's earlier years, and the loss is greater in a sense, but perhaps the pain is no deeper. No wonder Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him and kissed him, when he saw that he was dead. His grief was sore; his sense of loss was great.

Quickly Joseph set about to do all that love could do to honor the name and memory of his father. The body was embalmed. Then followed seventy days of mourning, according to the custom in Egypt. After this the patriarch's dying command was obeyed, and the twelve sons, with many Egyptian friends, among them men of rank, bore the body away to Canaan, and laid it to rest beside the bodies of his kindred.

The burial was at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah. This cave is covered now by a great Mohammedan mosque. The entrance is so sacredly guarded that none save Mohammedans can enter it. There are shrines in the mosque for each of the dead who sleep beneath—Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, Jacob. In the interior of the building is a small circular opening which leads down into the ancient cave, where no doubt the twelve sons of Jacob laid the embalmed body of their father.

- Contributed

(To be continued)

The Chronology of the Septuagint

THE SEPTUAGINT, the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, was universally received during the first six centuries of the Christian era.

"The reason why so many of the early church fathers were mistaken in supposing the end near at hand, was because they reckoned the 6000 years, according to the Septuagint, were nearly expired in their time.

"Hippodytus, a bishop of Italy about 220 A.D., writes: Antichrist shall reign his predicted time, persecuting the saints, then will take place Christ's coming, personal, in glory. Following the Septuagint, he fixed the termination of the 6000 years about 200 years from his time.

"Lactantius, writing about 300 A.D. on the Millennium, supposed it would commence about 200 years from his time.

"Cyprian sets forth the earliest date as 243; Clement in 374; several in 500; Sulpitius Severeis in 581 and Augustine in 650 A.D. The barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire greatly helped to confirm their convictions. As proof of the incorrectness of the Septuagint be it observed that it makes Methuselah to have lived several years after the flood."

-Daniel Taylor, "VOICE OF THE CHURCH."

WHY THE DIFFERENCE?

It may be asked as to just where and why the Septuagint chronology should differ from the Hebrew.

The Hebrew text gives the ages of the ten antedeluvians when they begat children as follows: Adam at 130; Seth at 105; Enos at 90; Cainan at 70; Mahalaleel at 65; Jared at 162; Enoch 65; Methuselah at 187; Lamech at 182; and Noah at 502.

For some strange, unaccountable reason, the Septuagint translators add 100 years to each of the following six when they became fathers: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, and Enoch. To Lamech they added 6 years. This would bring the flood in 2264 years, but changing Lamech's age places Methuselah's death six years after the flood.

Again in Noah's descendants the Septuagint makes wide variations. At the age when they became fathers, it adds 100 years to each of the following six, making Arphaxad 135, Shelah 130; Eber 134, Peleg 130, Reu 132, Serug 130.

To Nahor, the son of Serug and grandfather of Abraham, 150 years are added to the Hebrew text of 29 years, although the Alexandrine and Lucian manuscripts add only 50 years.

The Septuagint seems to hesitate to allow them to beget a son until they are at least 100 years old."

Additionally, "it inserts Cainan as the son of Arphaxad and father of Shelah at the age of 130 years. But this is not mentioned in Genesis 11:13 and I Chronicles 1:18, 24. Luke, making use of the Septuagint, quotes it. - Luke 3:36." - See *Davis Bible Dictionary*.

The author of "Present Conflict of Science and Religion," 1891, says he "prefers" the Septuagint. Under Chronology, he assumes the population to have doubled every 25 years, which is very plausible as the fathers had an average of five sons. At this rate the population from the flood to the covenant with Abraham, 427 years, would have been over a million. But the above author accepts the 1247 years of the Septuagint for this period and carries his figures of the rate of increase for a thousand years *after the flood* and then stops, much surprised for he has 8000 million, four times the population of the earth today.

Does the inspired Word of God give evidence as to which of the two foregoing estimates may be acceptable?

We read that (1) Abram was a sojourner, a wanderer in the land of Canaan, (2) that the Hittites called him 'a mighty prince' (Gen. 23:6), and (3) hearing of the capture of Lot, Captain Abram assembles his army of 318 men, pursues that great general, Chedorlaomer, and his allies, overtakes and defeats them at Dan and pursues them to Damascus. He brings back the captives and their goods and declines to accept a gift for his services. - Gen. 14:1-16.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Egypt, above all countries, was known for its prolific increase in population. The increase of the Israelites in Egypt is described as being of a phenomenal order, five different expressions being used:

"And the children of Israel were (1) fruitful and (2) increased *abundantly* and (3) waxed' *exceeding* mighty and (4) the land was *filled* with them. And the new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph, said unto his people, Behold, the children of Israel are (5) *more* and mightier than we are." - Exod. 1:7-9.

THE TRANSLATORS OF THE SEPTUAGINT

"The Septuagint is a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language for the Greek speaking Jews of Alexandria -- and perhaps for other countries. It was begun about 280 B.C.

"Dismissing the fanciful traditions about the 70 translators, it is now generally believed that it was done by Alexandrian Jews rather than Palestinian Jews, because:

" (1) It shows an imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew.

" (2) It contains many words and phrases which are peculiar to the Greek used in Alexandria.

" (3) It contains a liberal amount of Egyptian words.

" (4) It contains errors regarding names and places in Palestine.

" (5) The translation, in many places, is a free one. In Daniel it is excessively free and inaccurate. On the whole it seems like the work of amateurs without rules.

" (6) A good Palestinian Jew, at that time at least, would abhor the thought of translating their Scriptures into a heathen language."

PREPARING AN OLD TESTAMENT SYNAGOGUE ROLL

"Utmost care and strictest rules were observed. Some are:

" (1) A skin, prepared by a Jew only.

" (2) No word or letter could be written from memory.

" (3) The scribe must first have an authentic copy before him.

" (4) He must read and pronounce each word aloud before writing it..

" (5) He -must wipe his pen each time before writing the word for 'God.'

" (6) The revision of the roll must be made in 30 days. -

" (7) One mistake condemned a sheet and 3 mistakes a whole manuscript.

" (8) Every word and letter was counted.

" (9) No one letter could touch another."

"This may appear extreme and absurd to us, yet it shows how sacred the Holy Word was to its custodians and gives us strong encouragement to believe that we have the real Old Testament."

- *Prof. H. S. Miller*, "FROM GOD TO US."

Recently Deceased

Brother D. H. Copeland, Toronto, Ont. - (July).

Brother W. R. Gillespie, E. Liverpool, Ohio - (June).

Sister Etta Glenn, E. Liverpool, Ohio - (June).

Brother William Herboth, New York, N. Y. - (July).

Sister Ella M. Kuehn, Wilson, W. Va. - (June).

Brother A. J. Negley, Canton, Ill. - (July).

Brother Walter Steurwald, Sheboygan, Wis. - (June).

Sister Erma Violanti, Rochester, N. Y. - (June).

The Question Box

Matthew 16:18

Question:

In Matthew 16:18 our Lord is reported to have said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." What is the significance of this statement? Please also explain the meaning of the words in the next verse, which read: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

Answer:

Roman Catholic theologians teach that in the words "upon this rock," our Lord has reference to Peter, himself.

It will be recalled that when his brother Andrew introduced him to the Lord, Simon had been greeted by; Jesus with the words: "Thou art Simon the son of John: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation Peter" (that is, a rock or a stone. - John 1:42 margin, A.R.V.). At that time Simon was anything but a rock, but our Lord's penetrating glance saw in the hot-headed, impulsive, rash, unstable Simon other qualities which, in *his* skilful and loving hands, could be, and would be, so trained and developed, so molded and strengthened, as to give him the self-control he lacked; which would. -fit him for service, make him stout-hearted and strong where he was now weak-helpful, no longer unreliable, in the cause which at heart he loved.

Catholics, indeed, contend for much more than this. It is their position that, after his resurrection, having previously conferred on Simon the name of Cephas, our Lord made Peter "Prince of the Apostles"; that when he thrice reinstated him in the under-shepherd's office (John 21:15-23) our Lord conferred on Peter a primacy -- a primacy which he began to exercise immediately following our Lord's ascension.

Protestant expositors readily admit the outstanding leadership of Peter during the early days of the Church. This is clearly in evidence in the events recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Some, indeed, share the Catholic view that in the words, "upon this rock," our Lord had reference to Peter. However, such Protestant scholars reject the further Catholic claims that this pre-eminence descended to a line of successors. For this idea Protestants of all shades of belief find no Scriptural basis.

Most Protestant scholars, however, do not believe that the words, "upon this rock," refer to Peter. Such believe that had that been our Lord's meaning, he would have said: "Thou art Peter and upon *thee* will I build my 'Church.'" On this point there is an interesting footnote in Rotherham's translation.

Other scholars, too, have noted that in Matthew 16:18 the word "Peter" is a translation of the Greek word *petros*, which means a (piece of) rock; whereas the word "rock" is a translation of the Greek word *petra*, which means a (mass of) rock. On this point see the Greek Dictionary in the back of Strong's Concordance, Nos. 4074 and 4073. The word *petra* suggests the bed-rock out of which pieces of rock or stones are cut; whereas *petros* carries the thought of one of such stones; 'a large stone, indeed, and perhaps the first -- certainly one of the first -- to be laid upon the great underlying Rock-foundation on which all the faithful would be built.'

Some of the early Christian Fathers -- indeed some modern Protestant expositors, have supposed that the rock referred to was not Peter, but Peter's confession of faith; the faith to which he had just given expression in Matt. 16:16, namely -- that Jesus was the long promised Christ -- the Messiah of Old Testament prophecy. Against this interpretation, however, there has been urged, what appears to be a valid objection. The objection is this: In Scripture, whenever the word "rock" is employed figuratively, it is applied to *persons*, never to *things*. Indeed, the designation "rock" in the Old Testament is applied *only to Jehovah*; in the New Testament only to *Christ*. For example: "He [God] is the rock" (Deut. 32:4); "Who is a rock, save our God?" (2 Sam. 22:32); "In the Lord Jehovah is a rock of ages." (Isa. 26:4, margin); "They drank of a spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was the Christ." - 1 Cor. 10:4, margin.

Christ, then, not Peter, nor yet Peter's confession of faith, but Christ himself is the rock. And on *this* rock he has ever since been building his Church. The bed-rock, the "Rock of Ages, is here, in Matthew 16:18, as elsewhere in the Scriptures, God, as revealed in his Son.

In harmony with this, the Apostle Paul declares: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." - 1 Cor. 3:11.

We come now to those other words: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven." What is the meaning here?

In these words the Savior varies his presentation. He had spoken of his Church as an edifice, himself as its bed-rock, and Peter as likely to become an important foundation-stone, to be well and truly laid upon it. The figure in his mind was evidently that of a temple. Now he likens his Church to a kingdom. The headquarters of a kingdom is a city; keys would be needed to open its gates.

Elsewhere in the Scriptures our Lord declares that he, and he alone possesses the key. This he tells us in language unmistakable, in his message to the Church at Philadelphia: "These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth." (Rev. 3:7.) The only one possessing the power to open the door into his Church was and is Himself. But when he spoke, his earthly course was about to be ended. Henceforth he would operate through honored agents. Whom shall, he use to open the doors of the Kingdom? *The answer to this question may be seen in the events which followed his ascension.* Very evident it is that to Peter it was granted, in his great discourse on the day of Pentecost, to open the door of the Kingdom to the Jews. (Acts 2:14, 40.) To him also was assigned the high privilege of opening that door to the Gentiles, in the case of Cornelius. (Acts 10, 11; 15:7.) In this privilege of opening the door to both Jews and Gentiles Peter was, indeed, signally honored; but only in this did he have any pre-eminence amongst the Apostles. And of course, such a prominence, granted for a particular service, could not, in its very nature, be passed on to a successor.

It is worthy of note that the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven, mentioned in the closing words of Matt. 16:19, was granted not only to Peter, but to all the Apostles. (Matt. 18:18.) These phrases, "whatsoever thou shalt bind," and "whatsoever thou shalt loose," were common Hebrew expressions, having a definite and well-known meaning. "To bind" meant "to forbid," or "to declare forbidden." "To loose" meant "to allow," or "to declare allowable." The eminent scholar, Lightfoot, tells us that one might produce thousands of examples from the writings of the Jews to prove that such was the meaning of the phrases in question. By our Lord's employment of them here, then, may be understood, in harmony *with* his promise in John 16:12, that after he had been crucified, raised from the dead, and ascended to God's right hand, the holy

spirit of truth would be sent to them, to guide and direct them in their ministry, so that in their presentation of the Gospel, and in all related matters, in connection with the unfolding of God's great plan of salvation, the true followers of the Master might have confidence that they were having revealed to them, not merely the thought of the Apostles, but the very mind and purposes of God.

To summarize then, Jesus is, as the hymn-writer *has* suggested:

". . . The great Rock-foundation,
Whereon our feet were set by sovereign grace;
Not life, nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face."

Meanwhile, while we do not worship them, we delight to honor those whom Jesus honored, namely, the Twelve Apostles, as being, all of them, foundation stones indeed. The wall of the City (of the New Jerusalem) , we are told -by Peter himself, is built of living stones. (1 Pet. 2:4, 5.) And the Master, in "the vision glorious," has told us that this wall has twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. (Rev. 21:14.) And not only *are* their *names* inscribed there; these foundations are seen to be "adorned with all manner of precious stones." (Verse 19.1) Well may we honor them.

To close with words well known to us all, we "are being built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; in whom every building, fitly framed together, groweth into a *holy* temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of *God* in the spirit." - Eph. 2:20-22, A.R.V., margin.

- P. L. Read.