

Hope Comes from God's Grace

Key Verse: *"Now
our Lord Jesus
Christ himself, and
God, even our
Father, which hath
loved us, and hath
given us
everlasting
consolation and
good hope through
grace, Comfort
your hearts, and
stablish you in
every good word
and work."*

**—II Thessalonians
2:16,17**

Selected Scripture:
**II Thessalonians
2:1-3,9-17**

THE HEAVENLY FATHER

has made special provision for us as the footstep followers of his son, Christ Jesus. His love for us is shown in the assurance that, "The God of love and peace shall be with you." (II Cor. 13:11) This is made possible through the giving of his son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Our Father, who has loved us greatly, will accomplish the work that he has begun in us, if we are submissive to his will.

God said, through the prophet, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." (Jer. 31:3) If

we have given our all to him from the heart in consecration, we have the promise that he will "finish in you the same grace also." (II Cor. 8:6) Through his love God has committed a special work to his son, Christ Jesus our Lord, as shown by the words: "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."—Heb. 12:2

From the beginning of our lesson we note that the words from our Key Verse are addressed to the called ones of God. Those who have answered this call by making a full consecration to God have been the recipients of God's grace. "By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8) Although salvation is by God's grace, it must be claimed by unwavering faith. Paul said, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (Heb. 11:1) Not only by faith do we have this opportunity, "but faith which worketh by love."—Gal. 5:6

Hope is mentioned in our title, and it should also have a place of great importance in our lives. Hope is listed along with faith and love in I Corinthians 13:13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity [love]." To realize our hope, provided by God's grace, we must demonstrate complete loyalty to our loving Heavenly Father and his Son. To be pleasing to the Father requires a character in harmony with his attributes of wisdom, justice, love, and power, as well as full obedience of heart and mind. We must bring "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—II Cor. 10:5

God has called and is preparing a special, select group, from the world of mankind—a New Creation. This great work of God was made possible because he also purposed that first Jesus "by the grace of God should taste death for every man." (Heb. 2:9) As a result, those whom God has called are able "by patient continuance in well doing [to] seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2:7) This opportunity brings with it much responsibility and work to those who answer God's call, and who desire to realize their hope. Each is required to put off the "old man" and its ways. "Put off concerning the former conversation the old man . . . And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Eph. 4:22,24 ■