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IS HOPE AN ASSET OR A LIABILITY?

By: C. D. COLE

Introduction: This may seem a strange question for debate. But it is not so one-sided as might at first appear. Hope may be a curse as well as a blessing. Hope may give pain as well as pleasure. Hope may be a false prophet as well as a true prophet.

It is interesting to read the poets on the subject of hope. One of them, after thinking how hopes have ended in disappointment, wrote these lines:

"Hope tells a flattering tale,
Delusive, vain, and hollow.
Ah! let not hope prevail,
Lest disappointment follow."

But another poet writes in defense of hope and says:

"Hope! of all ills that men endure,
the only cheap and universal cure."

And Wordsworth expresses his doubt about the value of hope:

"Hopes! what are they? Beads of morning,
Strung on slender blades of grass;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a straight and treacherous pass."

Then comes Oliver Goldsmith, who says:

"Hope, like a gleaming taper's light,
Adorns and cheers our way."

Hope may be defined as the faculty of the soul that anticipates the future with a sense of peace and pleasure. All men have hope of some sort. Pope well says,

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Man never is, but always to be blest."

Hope is one of the principal springs of action; the thing that keep men in motion. Without hope human endeavour would sicken and die. Without hope of harvest the farmer would not plant and cultivate. Without hope of pay the miner would not hazard his life in the treacherous mine. Without hope of profit the merchant would close up shop. Without hope of happiness lovers would not march to the marriage altar. "In all the wedding cake hope is the sweetest of the plums."

While all this can be said about the worth of hope, it is also true that hope can give pain as well as pleasure. Many a hope has ended in disappointment. It is true that hope often lies to us. Not half the good things we have yearned and hoped for have been realized. If hope deferred makes the heart sick, then how terrible is a dead hope; a hope never realized. As a pastor I have entertained hopes that have ended in utter disappointment. I have hoped for faithfulness in church members who would not be faithful. I have hoped for cooperation from many who never gave it.

The hope of a happy home has turned out to be a lie with many a husband and wife. And think of the parents whose hope concerning their children was turned into black despair. I expect it is true that hope ends in despair more often than in joy. Hope has too often made us toil and struggle and then fed us on mighty husks. Either we did not get

what we expected or when we realized the thing hoped for we found it was not as good as we thought it would be from afar.

But back to the thought that "hope" like a gleaming taper's light, adorns and cheers our way.

A study of women workers in a factory showed that at the end of the day's work some were limp with fatigue, while others were bright-eyed and wide-awake. All had worked the same number of hours, and it was discovered that difference in ages had not made the difference. It was found that most of the bright and wide-awake ones had plans for the evening; some pleasure to look forward to. Some of these plans were not very noble and godly, but they were expecting a good time, and their hope of a good time had a good effect on their bodies and spirits. The tired ones had nothing to look forward to with pleasure; they were to face the drudgery of cooking and doing the dishes and the company of a man who was interested in nothing more than getting the news or reading the paper.

If I were not a Christian and a preacher, I think I would be interested in psychiatry as the best means of being useful. If there is no eternity; no heaven or hell; if this life ends all; then the best hope anybody could have would be to eat, drink, and be merry, have a good time, without any thought of any eternal tomorrow.

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THE ANTICHRIST IN THE PSALMS

By: C. D. COLE

Across the varied scenes depicted in prophecy there falls **the shadow of a figure** at once commanding and ominous. We have seen Christ as the subject of prophecy under many titles and names, but there is another person who is opposite of Christ in character and conduct. This antichrist appears under many different names; like the aliases of a criminal, his character and movements are set before us. He appears in the Psalms just as the true Christ our Saviour does. We can only give some of the reverences to him in the Psalms:

Psalm 5:6, "...the bloody and deceitful man." This Psalm seems to be a prayer of the Jewish remnant in the tribulation period—views the antichrist in relation to the godly Jews. In earlier stages of his career he will seem to favor the Jews and will pose as their friend and benefactor. He makes a formal covenant with them in Daniel 9:27 and their peace and security seem assured. But later he comes out in his true character. He breaks his covenant; Psalm 55:20, "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant." He turns upon the Jews in fury, becomes their worst enemy. Cuts them off from being a nation in the earth. Psalm 83:4, "They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance."

Psalm 10:2,4, "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor: let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined...The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts." This entire Psalm is about the wicked one. It contains the cry of the Jewish remnant during tribulation times of trouble. The antichrist described: his pride, verse 2, "The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor..."; his depravity abhorreth the Lord, verse 3, "For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth"; his blasphemy, verse 4, "...God is not in all his thoughts"; his grievous ways, verse 5, "His ways are always grievous..."; his

deceitfulness, verse 6, "He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved..."; his consuming egotism, verse 6, "...for I shall never be in adversity"; his treachery, verse 8, "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor"; his cruelty, verses 9 and 10, "He lieth in wait secretly **as a lion in his den**: [I Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"] he lieth in wait to catch the poor: he doth catch the poor, when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth, and humbleth himself, that the poor may fall by his strong ones"; and his complacent pride, verse 11, "He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: he hideth his face; he will never see it."

Psalm 10:18, "...the man of the earth may no more oppress." The man of the earth. Wicked man describes his character; the man of the earth defines his position. The one speaks of his awful depths of depravity; the other of his vast dominions. His operation will be worldwide. World-Emperor. Christ refused from Satan all the kingdoms of the world. In Matthew 4:8-9, "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

Psalm 52, the mighty man. This is another Psalm devoted to the description of the character of the antichrist. We see here his boastfulness, verse 1, "Why boastest thou thyself in mischief, O mighty man?"; his depravity, verse 3, "Thou lovest evil more than good..."; his egotism, verse 4, "Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue"; his riches, verse 7, "Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness." His doom is announced in verse 5, "God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, he shall take thee away, and pluck thee out

of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah." The mighty man refers to his immense wealth and possessions.

Psalm 55:3, the enemy. "Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me." View antichrist as the enemy of the Jews—contrasted with that friend that sticketh closer than a brother. His duplicity and treachery are referred to, verse 21, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

Psalm 74:8-10, the adversary. "They said in their hearts, Let us destroy them together: they have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land. We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long. O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?" This title occurs in several passages. Isaiah 59:19, "So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." Lamentations 4:11, "The LORD hath accomplished his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof." Amos 3:11, "Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD; An adversary there shall be even round about the land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled."

Psalm 110:6, the head over many countries. "He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries." The Caesar of the last world empire, prior to the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ.

Psalm 140, the violent man. Verse 1, "Deliver me, O LORD, from the evil man:

preserve me from the violent man." Verse 4, "Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings." Verse 11, "Let not an evil speaker be established in the earth: evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him."

HOPE: ASSET OR LIABILITY? (Continued from page one)

We have been speaking of hope in general; hopes that lie within the realm of this present life. But the believer's hope is farsighted; it pierces the veil between this world and eternity and expects joys beyond this life. And the believer's hope is well founded; it will never end in disappointment. It is a hope that is both sure and steadfast.

There is no room for debate as to whether Christian hope is an asset; there is no danger that it will end in disappointment. And there is no danger that heaven will not come up to our expectations.

Let us look at some adjectives that describe the Christian's hope:

1. It is called a **good hope** through grace. II Thessalonians 2:16, "*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.*" This good hope based on grace is well founded. This hope is no illusion; it does not come from fumes of fancy or play of imagination. It is not mere desire where the wish is father to the thought.

2. It is lively or living hope. It is no poor pale ghost frightening and then fading; fainting and then reviving and then fainting again. Proverbs 4:18, "*But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*"

3. It is the blessed or happy hope. All other hopes may pay into sorrow. The gospel hope gives lasting joys. In all earth hopes there is an element of unrest. Hope of wealth; health; friends; fame, etc.

4. It is referred to as the glorious hope. It is the hope of the glory of God

for ourselves, the hope that one day we will be conformed to the image of Christ. Nothing here to be ashamed of. The hope of the atheist is that he will die like a cat or dog and be done for. Others hope that when they die they will go to purgatory and after so much prayers and payments finally get to heaven. But the glorious hope is that when we are absent from the body we will be present with the Lord. I Thessalonians 4:16-17, "*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*"

THE GROUND OF THIS HOPE

This hope rests upon the word of God about the value of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Faith is satisfied with Christ as Saviour and Lord; satisfied with what He has done and this gives support to hope of future glory. When this Bible is found to be false our hope will die. When the blood of Christ is found to be of no value to a poor helpless sinner, our hope will turn to despair.

The child of God, with a hope so well founded, and of such a glorious nature, ought to be bright-eyed and on tip-toe with expectancy of such a glorious future. It will help the spirit of the believer to be occupied with the promises of God concerning his eternal good. If it is the Lord's will I want to keep my eyes on the glory that shall surely follow this life of sorrow and suffering. I want to hope and hope to the end for the promises of glory; the hope of appearing with Him in glory.

"Hope on, hope on, O troubled heart,
If doubts and fears o'ertake thee,
Remember this - the Lord hath said,
He never will forsake thee;
Then murmur not, still bear thy lot,
Nor yield to care or sorrow;
Be sure the clouds that frown today
Will break in smiles tomorrow.

"Hope on, hope on, through dark and deep
The shadows gather o'er thee;
Be not dismayed; thy Saviour holds
The lamp of life before thee;
And if He will that thou to-day
Shouldst tread the vale of sorrow;
Be not afraid, but trust and wait;
The sun will shine tomorrow.

"Hope on, hope on, go bravely forth
Through trial and temptation,
Directed by the worth of truth,
So full of consolation;
There is a calm for every storm,
A joy for every sorrow,
A night from which the soul shall wake
To hail and endless morrow."