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"ONE HOPE."

There has been a great deal said and written on hope; there is being a great deal said and written on it; and yet what constitutes the "One Hope" seems to be, to many minds, as vague as ever. Some claim "the large hope," others "the larger hope," and others again "the largest hope." Anything more vague than such phrases is scarcely conceivable. In the same way, some seem to prefer the small hope, others the smaller hope, and others again the smallest hope, as though they had concluded that the smaller their hope the more certain would be its genuineness. The extent of the hope, whether it be large or small, does not constitute its genuineness. It may be the largest conceivable and yet be a counterfeit, and it may be the smallest conceivable and still be no better. All depends upon the elements of the hope being right and its foundation [R1435 : page 245] adequate. There is much to be learned by considering the phrases which inspired men have used regarding hope.

"NO HOPE."

In writing to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul reminded them of a time when they had no hope: "Remember [said he] that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands: that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:11,12.) The Apostle did not mean that they had no hope of anything. Like other men, those Ephesians had hope of a great many things, but at the time referred to they had no hope of the things in question. The things in question are "the unsearchable riches of Christ," and at the time referred to they

were "without Christ." Before Christ came the descendants of Israel, called "the Circumcision," had a polity or citizenship of their own, but the other nations of the earth, called "the Uncircumcision," had neither part nor lot in the matter. Before Christ came the Circumcision were under "covenants of promise," but the Uncircumcision were "strangers and foreigners" to all that they contained. The Ephesians were a fair sample of the Gentiles generally. Without the Christ all men are without "the hope" in the world. [R1435 : page 246]

"THE HOPE."

The one hope is designated "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23), "the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3:7), "the hope of salvation" (1 Thes. 5:8), "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27), etc. Nothing could be more specific. It is not *a* hope, but *the* hope. It is not *some general* hope, but *this particular* one – the hope comprising the specified elements. The specific character of the hope is emphasized by all the apostles, but by none more so than the Apostle Paul. Take another example. Referring to the Gentiles in Christ being built upon the same foundation as the Israelites in Christ, he says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." "For this cause I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known to me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with

longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in *one hope* of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Eph. 2:19 to 4:6.) "The household of God" is no longer composed exclusively of Israelites, but of those out of every nation; and its one foundation is occupied by Israelites and non-Israelites alike. The anxiety of the apostle is that "the unity of the Spirit" may be kept in the bond of peace. He enumerates the elements of that unity. They are seven units; and one of those units is the "one hope." There can no more be two hopes in "the unity of the Spirit" than there can be two Lords or two Gods in it.

"THE HOPE OF ISRAEL."

The one hope is the hope of Israel. The Jews accused the Apostle Paul of heresy, and he was under examination before Felix. When Festus succeeded Felix, Paul was in prison at Caesarea. The Jews wanted Paul sent to Jerusalem for trial, Paul appealed unto Caesar, and Festus sent him to Rome. At Rome Paul called the chief of the Jews together, and having explained to them his position he declared: "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you, because for *the hope of Israel* I am bound with this chain." They expressed their desire to hear him concerning the "sect" which was everywhere spoken against, "and when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not." Then Paul applied to those who believed not the words of "the Holy Spirit by Esaias the prophet" (Isa. 6:9,10), and concluded with this emphatic announcement: "Be it known therefore unto you, that the Salvation of God is sent

unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." (Acts 28:16-31.) There are three phrases here – "the Salvation of God," "the kingdom of God," and "the hope of Israel." They are practically the equivalents of each other, and cover "those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." Israel, of course, is the nation composed of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their descendants; and the hope of Israel is the blessedness promised to that nation, and through it to all the nations of the earth. The Salvation of God is another way of expressing the blessedness promised in the Abrahamic covenant, and the Kingdom of God is the medium through which that blessedness is to be realized; so that whatever [R1435 : page 247] there is in the Kingdom of God, and in the salvation of God, there is also in the hope of Israel, and *vice versa*.

"THE HOPE OF THE PROMISE."

The hope of Israel is the hope of the promise. Before the Apostle Paul was sent to Rome, and while under examination at Caesarea, he testified, saying: "My manner of life from my youth, which was at first among my own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for *the hope of the promise* made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:4-8.) Hope is impossible without a promise. Genuine hope is impossible without an adequate promise. The one hope is impossible without the Divine promise. The Divine promise is the foundation upon which the one hope rests. The foundation of the one hope is not any Divine promise, nor every Divine promise, but *the* Divine promise – "the promise

made of God unto our fathers." The particulars of the promise can be easily traced. To **Abraham** the Lord said: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee, and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee, and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting (age-lasting) covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee." To **Isaac** the Lord said: "Go not down unto Egypt, dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of; sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of Heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And to **Jacob** the Lord said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:2-3; 17:1-7; 26:1-4; 28:10-15.) In these particulars of the promise there are several elements, some of which require special attention.

1. – The **Blessedness** promised. The root of the blessedness is the resurrection of the dead. Hence the interrogation which the Apostle Paul addressed to King Agrippa touching the hope of the promise: "**Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?**" (Acts 26:8.) It is the fact that the resurrection of the dead is the root of blessedness promised which gives to the interrogation its point. Were the resurrection of the dead not the root of the blessedness promised, Paul's

question in such a connection would be senseless. But Paul did not indulge in senseless questions; and this one is most pertinent. The blessedness promised is the removal of the curse which is resting upon man and his entire environment, and that curse cannot be removed without his resurrection from the dead. Resurrection is a re-standing or standing again, not in some stage of a fallen or lapsed state or condition, but in Adam's original state and condition, which was in every respect "very good." (Gen. 1:31.) Resurrection is complete restoration to the state and condition in which Adam left the hands of his Creator. The resurrection of a "blind" man is complete when he sees as clearly as Adam ever saw; the resurrection of a "deaf" man is complete when he hears as acutely as Adam ever heard; the resurrection of a "dumb" man is complete when he speaks as fluently as Adam ever spoke; the resurrection of a "leper" is complete when he is as clean as Adam ever was; and the resurrection [R1435 : page 248] of a "lunatic" is complete when he is as sane as Adam ever was. In like manner every element of every disease, defect, deformity, [R1436 : page 248] weakness, etc., physical and mental, might be enumerated, and whatever it may be the resurrection of its subject is complete when he is delivered from it. The resurrection of the dead varies as to time, order, manner, etc. That is only of secondary importance. It is of first importance, however, to see that the resurrection is re-standing in man's original state and condition; and that that is the root of the blessedness promised by Jehovah.

2. The *Extent* of the blessedness promised. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their seed are to be blessed. That is the Israelitish part of the promise. All the nations of the earth are to be blessed. That is the non-Israelitish part of the promise. It is not Abraham alone, nor Isaac alone, nor Jacob alone who is to be blessed, but all three individually. Nor is it merely those three fathers who are to be blessed, but the whole of their children as well. It is not some particular generation or generations of the patriarchal seed

who are to be blessed, but the whole of their generations. Nor is it some particular generation or generations of all the nations of the earth who are to be blessed, but the whole of their generations. This, that, or the other generation or generations of one nation is not the equivalent of one nation, nor is this, that, or the other generation or generations of all nations the equivalent of "all nations;" in each case it is only a part, and a part is not the equivalent of the whole. The one part of the promise covers every individual of the Israelitish nation, and the other part of the promise covers every individual of all the other nations of the earth without exception, past, present, or future.

To have "The hope of the promise" in its integrity it is necessary to have the promise in its integrity, and to have the promise in its integrity it is necessary to have at least its two major parts in their integrity. To limit or emasculate either of these parts is suicidal. If the Israelite limits or emasculates the Israelitish part of the Abrahamic Covenant he excludes himself from it, and if the non-Israelite limits or emasculates the non-Israelitish part of it he does the same. *Neither the one nor the other can then show that he is included in it.* Wish, desire, or expectation, ill or well-founded, he may have, but "The hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" he cannot have.

3. The *Medium* of the blessedness promised. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their seed are the medium. Not the whole of Abraham's seed, but his seed in that particular line: – "And God said to Abraham, As for Sarai, thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her." "Sarah, thy wife, shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting (age-lasting) covenant, and with his seed after him." (Gen. 17:15-19.) Referring to this election, the Apostle Paul

wrote: – "They are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children; but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. 9:6-8.) Abraham's wife was "barren," and they were both "old and well-stricken in age." What could Abraham do under such circumstances? He could *believe* "God who quickeneth (maketh alive) the dead;" and that was exactly what he eventually did: "Being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was *strong in faith*, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He hath promised He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Rom. 4:13-22.) *Thus Isaac was brought forth.* In reference to this son of promise, God afterwards said to Abraham: "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering." (Gen. 22:2.) [R1436 : page 249] What could Abraham do now? He could *obey* God; and that was exactly what he did: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, *offered up Isaac*, and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that In Isaac shall thy seed be called, accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." (Heb. 11:17-19.) *Thus Isaac was brought forth the second time.* The elect seed is the seed of "promise" throughout. The elect seed in "figure" was the seed of promise, and the elect seed in reality is also the seed of promise. The Apostle Paul identifies the real seed most unmistakably: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Not the Christ in one person merely, but the Christ in many persons: "For ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as

have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." – Gal. 3:16-29.

The medium of the blessedness was incomplete while it was merely "according to the flesh:" it required to be "according to the Spirit" also. Hence in writing respecting its Root, the Apostle Paul describes Him as having been "made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." "Whose are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Rom. 1:1-4; 9:5.) It was necessary that Christ should come according to the flesh in order that man might be redeemed; and He redeemed man from the curse by becoming a curse for him: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (Gal. 3:13,14.) The death of Christ was necessary, but the death of Christ in itself is not the medium of blessedness. There is no blessedness in death, but the death of Christ prepared the way for untainted life. Untainted life is the cardinal element of blessedness; and the Root of it is the Christ – "the Resurrection and the Life." In resurrection, in life, in incorruptibility, in immortality, and having all authority and power in heaven and on earth, Christ is the Root of the medium of blessedness for all the nations of the earth. In the complete medium of blessedness there are natures both human and divine. In those natures there are many ranks, and from the lowest to the highest of them Christ "is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen."

"THE HOPE AND RESURRECTION."

The Apostle Paul had often to defend his position. Sometimes his defence was before a sacred and at other times before a secular tribunal, but the ground-work of it was always substantially the same. When at Jerusalem, Paul was accused of polluting the Temple. This caused a great tumult, and some of the Jews "went about to kill him." The captain took him in charge, and "carried him into the castle." The next day, "because he would have known the certainty whereof he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them." In his defence, "when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: *of the hope and resurrection of the dead* I am called in question." (Acts 21 to 23.) "The Hope," "the Hope of Israel," "the Hope of the promise," and "the Hope and resurrection" are not so many different Hopes, but the "One Hope" presented under different phases. The hope was given to Israel, and is phrased "the hope of Israel;" the hope rests upon the promise of Jehovah, and is phrased "the hope of the promise;" and the hope in realization is the [R1436 : page 250] resurrection of the dead, and is phrased, "The hope and resurrection." When the phraseology of inspired men is ascertained and remembered their ideas may be apprehended, but without their phraseology their ideas are impossible of apprehension. In connection with no subject is it more important to bear this in mind than in connection with the present one, it being fundamental to every Christian. In his day, the Apostle Paul raised the One Hope as his rallying cry: "*Touching the resurrection of the dead* I am called in question by you this day" (Acts 24:21); and from that day to this it has been the only adequate rallying cry for the Church of the living God.

Because all men will eventually be raised from the first death to the second life, and that with all of life's original concomitants, it does not follow that all men will always live. They may, or they may not, according to each individual case. That was Adam's position at the beginning. He refused to conform to the law of the first life, and he incurred its penalty – the first death; and any man who may refuse to conform to the law of the second life will incur its penalty – "the second death." The promise made of God unto our fathers guarantees to every man the second life, but it guarantees no man against the second death. It is not God's purpose to unman any man. In voluntary obedience the second life is to be perpetuated, and in wilful disobedience it is to be terminated.

"The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." – Tit. 2:11,12.

– JOSEPH MOFFITT.
